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CALIBAN IN AFRICA

CALIBAN IN AFRICA

AN IMPRESSION OF COLOUR-MADNESS

By
LEONARD BARNES

“What have we here? a man or a fish? dead or alive?
A fish: he smells like a fish; a very ancient and fish-like
smell; a kind of not of the newest Poor-John. A strange
fish!”

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PREFACE

If any Dutch-speaking South African chances to read this book, he may be inclined, I am afraid, to spurn it as a mere addition, more or less irritating, to an already sufficiently long line of racialist attacks upon his people. In doing so, however, he would have misunderstood me. I wish, if possible, to guard against such misunderstanding.

In the sequel hard things are sometimes said about the Afrikaner. But that term, as I hope the text makes clear, does not for me carry with it any distinction, overt or implied, between Boer and British colonist. My Afrikaner is simply a personification of the general will of white South Africans as a class towards natives as a class. In this sense, he is an abstraction. On the other hand, he suffers incarnation whenever the self-identification of an individual white South African with that general will reaches completeness. The solidarity of local white opinion on the colour question is so extensive that this often happens.

For the modes of Afrikaner thought upon such matters I have no admiration. But I am not in the least concerned to apportion between Briton and Boer the blame for what appear to me its abysmal failures. Such divergences of view as exist among the white people of South Africa do not seem to be either localised

or racialised. In the Cape a ghostly tradition of liberalism still flits *per ora virum* ; but it is less and less honoured in practical observance. In the Transvaal, the Orange Free State, and Natal the intensity of anti-native sentiment is everywhere about equal. The predominantly British parts of the country to-day are not more reasonable than the predominantly Dutch.

If the situation of the natives in the Cape and Natal has hitherto been slightly more favourable than in the ex-republics, that is not because of any better feeling among the local whites, but because the influence of Great Britain has counted for more there in the past, and because those provinces have been fortunate in the services of a succession of good departmental officials as devoted to the true interests of the white man as to the native's.

L. B.

Cape Town.

April 11, 1930.

CONTENTS

<i>Chapter</i> I. Old Dutch	<i>page</i> 9
II. The Afrikaner	35
III. The Native	65
IV. The South African "Nation"	105
V. Kings and Knaves	133
VI. The Land	153
VII. Ebb or Flow?	177
VIII. Political Rights	187
IX. The Offending Foot	215
X. The Outlook	225

CHAPTER I
OLD DUTCH

This place is not wholly to be governed by wisdom, ability, or elevation of mind. There is a set of ways of thinking and prejudices amongst the residents, which it is worth the while of a man likely to remain here some time, to study.

LADY ANNE BARNARD

CHAPTER I

OLD DUTCH

§ 1

THE history of South Africa during the last hundred years is a repetition on a diminutive scale of the American experience. "For a generation or two, the American people, having achieved material stability, wrestled with the un-American spirit of the later immigrants. The struggle is not over, but it has been won. It was decided that the older and not the newer spirit would be that of the country and shape its future." The description applies exactly to what has happened and what is happening in South Africa. Patriotism is of two kinds there, and the heart's division divides them. The loyalty of the older inhabitants is to a South Africa with sharp exclusive boundaries—a fenced enclave, unaffected, except so far as concerns trade, by the world beyond. Their totem is a hedgehog, showing nothing but quills to the outer world. The newer elements dream of a South Africa eager to learn and absorb from, eager to mix with, the rest of the human family. They hold the most obvious feature of the country's present condition to be that it is grossly under-populated, and that its prosperity cannot increase without a large addition to the number of productive workers. The one ideal is

of expansion from within by assimilating food from without, as in every healthy organism ; the other is of nourishment by caving in upon itself, as the sun is said to refuel its fires. There can be small doubt which would have the stronger appeal for a wise man. But wise men butter no parsnips—I quote from memory. And in South Africa perhaps wisdom counts for even less than elsewhere. In the United States the newcomers often represented enlightenment, but the old inhabitants disliked their ideas, and impatiently rejected any claim they made to represent America. By a similar process, victory in South Africa has come to the lower and the narrower.

America offers another helpful parallel. Mr. E. A. Mowrer, in *This American World*, from which I have quoted above, explains how a man must have the frontier alive almost in his very blood before he can reach an emotional understanding of the United States. Starting at the Atlantic coast, the pioneers gradually drove westward to the Pacific. “Not an inch of our soil but has at one time or another been frontier. Where the first settlers passed, they quickened the land in their going. Where they lived and struggled against recalcitrant nature and more recalcitrant natives, future generations were born with altered mind and feeling. The result was the American spirit.”

The genesis of the Afrikaner spirit has been much the same. It is true that no one can grasp it emotionally until he has taken the “feel” of the trek into his system. But the parallel breaks down at one important

point. The first American rovers on the whole set out on their adventure in the temper of gay and swaggering buccaneers. Something in them, as Mr. Mowrer notes, dignified their very brutality and greed. They knew joy as well as vitality, and to their courage they added a sense of fun. What drove them was an honest and incredibly avid appetite for experience, together with a vaulting ambition to match their human powers against the unknown, perilous world. "I will fetch you a toothpicker now from the farthest inch of Asia ; bring you the length of Prester John's foot ; fetch you a hair of the great Cham's beard ; do you any embassy to the Pigmies." The Dutch trekker was also a brave and resourceful fellow. But he took his trekking sadly, as though it were the least of many evils. Indeed, that is exactly what it was to him. The American trekked to something ; the Dutchman trekked away from something. And what the Dutchman trekked away from was always order and good government. He moved not in search of a liberty which he proposed to put to some positive use, but merely because he resented being interfered with. So there was much of the costive and unaccommodating even about his pioneering escapades. Naturally, it has often been said that his motive was the hope of respite from English oppression. In point of fact, however, the tendency to trek was not much less marked under the Dutch Governors than under the English. It varied directly with the power of Governmental authority to affect the colonist's life. And, to give the English their due,

although they fought an inexcusable war in South Africa, their government there has never been oppressive.

Whenever the Dutchman trekked, he had to displace or subjugate recalcitrant natives. It was the price invariably required of him for the preservation of his temperamental indiscipline. The transaction is, as we shall see, more damaging to the upper than to the under dog. *Corruptio supremi pessima*. And that is the whole history of the South African Dutch—a perpetual edging away from organised government into trouble with the natives. Now, too late for him to withdraw from trouble with the natives, organised government has caught him up. There is at once the tragedy, the joke, and the poetic justice of his position.

The itch to be left alone is the prime characteristic of the Dutchman. The refrain, "We won't be humbugged about," is always sounding as an undertone in the Dutch mind. And this general disposition has been flattered and confirmed by his traditional mode of life on the land. The ideal Dutch economy is patriarchal and semi-nomadic. The head of the house occupies a "farm," often two hundred miles in circumference. It is really much more a private shooting reserve than a farm, though he runs some stock, grows the grain and vegetables needed for his household, and perhaps even puts in a vine and a fruit-tree or so. But his object is not to develop the land or to amass wealth; it is simply to maintain his house in plenty without recourse to barter, purchase, or any other form of exchange. The routine work of the farm he leaves to

managers and slaves, turning his own attention to the serious business of life—hunting game, visiting or entertaining his friends, and having rows with his enemies. If he needs more land for distribution among his numerous young, he expects to be able to seize a few thousand adjoining acres without further formality than the ejection of any occupying kafirs. It is a stuffy life for him if he finds himself in circumstances where such summary seizure is impracticable. He calls the feeling of stuffiness land-hunger.

In the early days, this ideal was actualised in all important particulars, and up to eighty years ago something very closely resembling it represented the normal life of the countryside. Lady Anne Barnard, writing just at the end of the eighteenth century, has some engaging and vivid sketches of it. Her friendly host, Jacob van Rhenin, as she calls him, gallops his waggon and eight for five hours a day over the veld, starting all manner of game and blending in a full-flavoured mixture the pleasures of the chase and of the shoot. “He liked to shoot from the waggon, being rather lazy. . . .” Other duties claimed but little of his attention, it seems. In its domestic aspect, the life sometimes had the biblical serenity of a stained-glass window, as Lady Anne found when she stayed at the house of Mynheer Wege. “Wine handed about half a dozen times in the course of the evening, pipes filled and smoked by the gentlemen, and the room filled with slaves—a dozen at least. The vrouw sat like Charity tormented by a legion of devils, with a black baby in

her arms, one on each knee, and three or four larger ones around her, smiling benignly on the little mortals, who seemed very sweet creatures, and devilish only in their hue. She and her husband have (for a wonder) no children of their own ; so they mean to leave their slaves free, and to give amongst them all their fortune."

The vision is quite apocalyptic, and for anyone who knows modern South Africa, no concubitus of lion and lamb could be more surprising.

Lady Anne's story of the pretty black slave, Dunira, and the bead necklace, is equally attractive. Lady Anne found herself in a sad quandary when Dunira asked for the gift of a bead necklace—because she had already given similar ones to the young ladies of the family. To repeat the boon to a slave " would have been nearly as much as my life was worth in some houses." So she made Mr. Barnard explain the difficulty to their hosts, van Rhenin and his wife, and consult them about what to do. The kindly couple, as soon as they took the point, " both laughed and cried out aloud, ' not to think anything of that—that she had been born in the house, and was a sort of child of the family—and that, if I had the beads, to give her them ' —which I did, making her happier than a young beauty would be with a diamond necklace."

These pictures are worth recalling, for they afford an interior glimpse of the real Dutch life at its best. They show that within the boundaries of the household the Dutchman is capable of an inclusive kindness which he never succeeds in carrying over into

more strictly political relations. In the political field he cleaves to the crudest forms of social injustice with ferocious tenacity ; and it is easy to assume that his private demeanour towards what he thinks his racial inferiors must always be equally disagreeable. But it is not so. The Dutch do not suffer from that involuntary reserve which keeps the Englishman a little aloof from natives, however much he may respect and like them. On the contrary, they will sometimes deal with natives more open-heartedly and in a certain sense more sympathetically, even while consciously despising them. It does not follow that because the Dutch always oppress natives politically, they always maltreat them in their homes and on their farms. Natives are habitually maltreated in outrageous ways all over South Africa, but the Dutch are probably not much worse offenders than the British, who have shown themselves readily corruptible in such matters. It is fair to add, however, that the Dutch have been the efficient cause of the corruption.

This curiously qualified benevolence is an essential part of the Dutch psychology. It manifests itself in many kinds of unlikely situations, and is at first difficult to reconcile with other traits not less strongly marked. The observer even doubts at times whether the Dutch soul may not be something genial and Christian after all. But on closer investigation the apparent contradiction resolves itself. It becomes possible to formulate the following natural law. Except in purely family relationships, the Dutchman only

shows spontaneous benevolence when he can do so, without prejudice, as an act of grace. Rights in the beneficiary or permanent obligations in himself he will not admit. Consequently, by an amusing paradox, those most often bask in his sunshine over whom he stands in a position of irresponsible authority, and who are, therefore, the most exposed victims of his displeasure. Naturally, like everyone else, and, indeed, more easily than most, he will simulate benevolence as a means to an end ; but for the moment our discussion is confined to what he does without calculating self-interest.

§ 2

It is all of a piece. So many Dutchmen have lived the life of Jacob van Rhenin—a life of self-sought isolation on the veld, a life where each farmyard encloses a sovereign independent state, but does not shut off the surrounding thousands of acres of wild country from the master's periodic sallies to assert his dominance over the fauna and flora. For the Dutchman loves the land, his land, with a queer, rough love, three parts acquisitive and but one part tender. And indeed Africa is a land to love, and perhaps to love best in that way. The Dutchman knows much more than I of what service she prefers, and I do not presume to criticise his methods. A deep and, I think, true instinct

governs his relations with her, almost as if she were his human mother.

*The beauty of the forest and the field
Surrounds him, and the austere mountains heave
The slow, triumphant rhythm of their line
Against the eastern sky. Their peaks at dawn
Crouch hooded each with monkish cowls of shade ;
And when the evening's coloured airs suffuse,
They stand to witness, breathless and aglow,
The funeral pomps of the transfiguring sun.
When shimmers the hot noon, the chattering jay
Flashes the lucent sapphire of its wing
Before his eyes. In his incurious brain
Are chronicled the fragrance and the grace
Of blossoming trees, and the mysterious form
Of hazy earth, as she dreams in the moon's pale glare.*

To throw open the whole sensibility to the myriad whispers and suggestions that surge up from the countryside at such times as these is to know a communion, terrible and lovely, with the hidden genius of the place. The Dutchman is, by heredity, sensitive to them all, and his sensitiveness is an aptitude which familiar use develops, rather than a tool which it blunts. He thus enjoys a peculiar intimacy with the formless but potent *numen* of Africa. He is not a pantheist, still less a student of æsthetic geography, and he is not given to elaborating this kind of experience in the mood of conscious poetry. But the experience is very real—often,

I should say, the deepest spiritual experience that comes to him ; and it may be the deeper, if not the stronger, for being largely inarticulate. It is obviously impossible for an outsider to describe its content, particularly when the Dutchman's own account of it is so meagre. But it seems to resemble a personal tie, binding him to the land in a kind of vague union. Beauty, I fancy, comes into it only to a small extent. The Dutchman is little moved by beauty, as such and unallied with desirability for some practical end.

Whatever it is, it has established in him a deep-rooted Alexander Selkirk complex. He must be monarch of all he surveys. How much he surveys is of minor consequence ; it is the monarchy that matters. He could be bounded in a nut-shell and count himself king of infinite space. Nor would he have bad dreams. The Dutch mind is an easy and sound sleeper, and conscience is never its most active part. The Dutchman's only stipulation is that no surrender of his arbitrary will should be asked of him in the interests of political freedom for himself or (*a fortiori*) for anybody else. Of political freedom, indeed, he has but the dimmest understanding. Freedom for him has one meaning, the passive and negative one of being left alone.

Illogically enough, although intelligibly, it does not include any duty to leave others alone. Here, indeed, we touch the *differentia* of the Dutch notion of freedom. Dutch freedom is always licence unlimited by any corresponding obligations. It is a profoundly anti-social idea, since it means freedom for the Dutchman

and for those favoured few with whom at his pleasure and on his own terms he may care to share it. Other components of society must make shift with whatever crumbs of citizenship he throws to them. Freedom as a strictly common possession, forming the basis of civilised society, the Dutchman neither grasps as a concept nor tolerates as a fact. Rousseau's theory of the social contract is equally beyond him. That theory no doubt has its weaknesses as an account of modern social structure, but it contains in allegorical form a valuable truth, namely, that freedom is only obtainable for a consideration. The Dutchman cannot imagine such consideration as given by himself, and therefore cannot see the social contract as binding on himself. In his idea, privilege, not freedom, is the basis of society.

The Dutchman is, in fact, a survival from a remote age when all human relationships were much simpler than they are to-day. The only such relationship he really understands is that of master and servant. Of course one master may enter into relations with another master ; but that kind of relation is terminable at will on either side. It is thus always avoidable, and in the last resort need not be reckoned with. But all unavoidable social relationships he instinctively seeks to interpret in terms of the master-servant relation. This peculiarity accounts for much of the racial feeling against the British. The Dutchman looks at the Briton, and sees that the Briton's method of address differs from that of his brother Dutchman. He explains the

difference by assuming that the Briton is treating him like a servant ; and the only possible adjustment that occurs to him is for himself to play the master over the Briton. Equality he can only think of as a neutral and unnatural state of equilibrium between the opposed master-servant tensions—an equilibrium which time is bound to upset. It is this manner of conceiving equality that makes the mention of equality *vis-à-vis* the native so abominably offensive to the Dutchman. He regards equilibrium in that relation not only as contrary to nature, but as contrary to the revealed decrees of God. And he hates all talk of equality there just as much for what he cannot understand of it as for what he can.

The truth is that the French Revolution, the industrial revolution, and the conquests of the scientific spirit have all passed him by. His outlook is virtually unaffected by the profound modifications which those movements have made in the *psyche* of the civilised world. He is thus a stranger to the complex social and personal relationships which dominate modern life in its distinctive forms. When the unifying forces of commerce, industry, finance, and communications thrust such relationships upon him, as they have now begun to do, he flounders in a real bewilderment. For, in essentials, he still belongs to the first half of the seventeenth century. He adapts himself to change far less readily than the Japanese, the Indian, or even the Turk under Mustapha Kemal's guiding hand. For sheer obscurantist conservatism probably the Afghan

alone can hold a candle to him. History, for the Dutchman, consists of his treks, and the various encounters with his two arch-adversaries, the Briton and the native—no more.

The inhabitants of Holland are a progressive and enlightened race. The differences between them and the African-Dutch may, then, be ascribed in the main to isolation in an African environment. We have already seen some of the more obvious ways in which the pressure of the environment has been at work. But its influence strikes much deeper than is generally supposed. The dry, clear air of Southern Africa seems designed to cradle another Athens, to bring back the golden years, and renew the world's great age. The face of nature there wears an austere magnificence, some part of whose effect even the dullest of soul must be conscious of. It is a land of health, where youth dwells amid fair sights and sounds, and has most special opportunities to "receive the good in everything ; where beauty, the effluence of fair works, may flow into the eye and ear like a health-giving breeze from a purer region, and insensibly draw the soul from earliest years into likeness and sympathy with the beauty of vision." Even Shelley's delicate and nimble spirit might, one supposes, have flourished there, since

*Heaven smiles, and faiths and empires gleam,
Like wrecks of a dissolving dream*

(—words to which the Stellenbosch heresy-hunt and the secessionist movement have lent particular point).

This renovated Athens might by now have been well on its way to actualisation in South Africa, had it been true, as the ancients sometimes believed, that the souls of men derive their inmost quality by the mere process of respiration, from the quality of the air the lungs inhale. But the Dutch were confirmed Bœotians long before they came to Africa. They have never had a grain of Attic salt in their composition, and not all the alchemy of the African sun could add it to them. Nor has the scenic grandeur amid which they have lived for generations produced the results an orthodox Platonist might have hoped. Doubtless it troubles them with occasional surges of undigested and unexpressed poetry, but it has not taken them far along the incline on which the soul ascends, in an ever-broadening vision of beauty as the reality of all things, to an approximation to God.

Or perhaps the God they are becoming like is a queer African God. Deep in the obscure soul of Africa there lurks a strange, Puckish humour, delighting in the grotesque. It is highly significant that the country which produced the Karoo and the rhinoceros should also have produced the Dutchman. For there is a real identity between certain elements in man and certain elements in other forms of creation. What the Karoo is in the realm of matter, and the rhinoceros in the realm of life, the Dutchman is in the realm of spirit.

The Karoo is an enormous tract of semi-desert land in the heart of the Cape Province. Much of it often goes without rain for years on end. In a time of drought

(and it is nearly always drought on the Karoo) its appearance is of absolute sterility. Nothing lives in it, save what can be

nourished on sunlight in a world of stone.

Boundless and bare, the lone and level veld stretches far away, its immense platitudes only broken by the gnarled hillocks of rock which protrude a little way towards the sky, like fantastic warts. The whole scene strongly suggests that God, when creating it, forsook His work in the initial stages, whether from boredom or from pressure of more important business. In the white glare of full daylight, much of the Karoo is nearly colourless ; but at dawn or set of sun, when the rays are level and red, it puts on a swift finery of fire, incredible and tremendous. In a similar way, its wastes will blossom like a garden for a few weeks after good spring rains. But without light, colour, and nourishment from outside, it is as naught. The Karoo affords the most apposite simile of the Dutch mind.

There is no need to describe the rhinoceros. He is known for his extremely improbable appearance, his courage, and his intransigent and treacherous temper. He is as disproportioned in his manners as in his shape.

In practice, then, those who simply breathe the crystal air of the backveld do not become the founders of a new Athens. As Mrs. Sarah Gertrude Millin observes, "The backvelder who has merely Nature to instruct him has a poor guide to those qualities which

arouse our trained admiration. None of those virtues we extol—not *esprit de corps*, nor self-sacrifice, nor honesty, nor chivalry, nor generosity, nor sympathy, nor self-restraint—are instincts.”

§ 3

Generally speaking, the traditional van Rhenin life gave the Dutchman a certain patriarchal bonhomie towards everything and everybody that formed a tolerably congenial part of his familiar life. This bonhomie was combined with an equally instinctive suspicion of everything and everybody else. But though the bonhomie never enlarged itself to include the unfamiliar, the suspicion did often spread to the familiar. The results of the process are typified in the Graaff-Reinet Boers. The Graaff-Reinet Boers were notorious in Lady Anne Barnard's day as a turbulent brood, given to chronic insurrection. Once they got what Kipling calls the cameelious hump about a thing, there were no lengths to which they would not carry their cussedness. Lady Anne gives an amusing example. “They particularly dislike their Landdrost, a very good sort of man, I hear, and affect to think themselves ill-used, now that they are British subjects, in not having an English Landdrost.” Their character has been described in detail by Henry Lichtenstein, a German traveller who visited the country a few years after Lady

Anne. Lichtenstein was usually a kindly observer, and he more than once affirms in his book that the Dutch colonists were "in general unjustly traduced by English and French travellers." The sharpness of his criticism of the people of Graaff-Reinet is therefore all the more telling. "Nothing," he says in discussing the official attempts at reconstruction after one of their periodical disturbances—"nothing but the unbounded confidence of the colonists in the benevolent views of the Government towards them could afford a prospect of rescuing them from so forlorn a condition, and reinstating them in anything like comfort and prosperity. Yet their rude and perverted ways of thinking abated in some measure the hope that it would be possible, at least immediately, to inspire them with a love of order, and a sense of submission and subservience to the laws. It seemed as if they had been too much accustomed to live without respect for any earthly power to be easily brought back to a due respect for that under which they were now to live. Their reciprocal irreconcilable spirit of discord and enmity towards each other, their wholly perverted ideas of right and wrong, their extravagant notions with regard to liberty, their total want of true religious principles, though making much external profession of piety—their perfect ignorance, in short, of all social duties, of all social virtues—had placed them in a most unfortunate situation both for themselves and for the Government.

"The total seclusion of the colonists from general intercourse with the world and with civilised life, their

confinement to the little circle of their own families, the easy manner in which the first necessities of our nature are satisfied, are very disadvantageous to them under many points of view ; and notwithstanding their simplicity of manners, their general purity of morals, and their ignorance of many of the greater crimes to which the European nations are subject, they appear, taken in the aggregate, even to impartial observers, much rather under an unfavourable than under a favourable point of view. Selfishness, lawlessness, hardness, intolerance, and a thirst for revenge, are the reigning vices in their character, which will perhaps hardly be thought to be atoned by a disposition to be easily satisfied, by a spirit of economy yet united with unbounded hospitality, a firm adherence to truth, and a great respect for religion. But what is most to be deprecated in the character of some among them, is the harshness with which they treat their slaves and Hottentots, and in others, the bitterness and irreconcilable animosity with which they carry on their differences among each other."

Every Dutchman to-day is a compound of the van Rhenin and the Graaff-Reinet elements. Individual psychologies vary according to the proportion and relative emphasis of each ingredient. The Graaff-Reinet element makes the Dutch very difficult customers for men of another race to deal with. It also seems to impart to the intercourse of Dutchmen with one another, both public and private, a sour and rasping flavour rarely found in homogeneous communities. This is as

true to-day as it was in the time of Lichtenstein. Even among themselves they are ready quarrellers. And the fact that they make up a quarrel easily merely means that it breaks out again with equal ease. No war and no peace with them is ever final.

It is easy to understand that the Dutch make poor townsmen. In a town not even a monarch is monarch of all he surveys. Town life demands habits of self-accommodation to the preconceptions of others and consideration for their claims. The Dutchman has great difficulty in forming such habits. His instinct, as Mrs. Millin puts it, is "when he discovers two other white beings settled within a mile of him to think how crowded the country is getting, and to worry about his water rights." Nor is he irked only by the freedom of the open spaces denied. The town forces upon him various standards of comparison with his fellows, and these he finds odious. Not that he lacks the competitive spirit ; but he seems to feel a kind of "new boy" timidity in the face of their unfamiliarity. In a polished social grace, for example, is implicit a group of mental distinctions which he does not understand, which possibly he would not accept, if he did, and which in any case, for want of understanding, he can only see as mere humbug and affectation. The Dutchman in the towns is thus as a rule unduly submissive or unduly truculent, according as his natural disposition is peaceful or pugnacious. But he rarely fits in smoothly with the new environment. His intercourse with his neighbour is apt to be either hostile, or false, or merely formal. To-day,

of course, there are plenty of Dutchmen in the towns who have been there for more than a generation and who are complete strangers to country life. But they also have a way of falling into two classes ; they either thrust themselves into unnatural prominence in public affairs, or they withdraw into an exaggerated isolation from them. To call them fish out of water would make them out too violently at odds with their surroundings ; say rather river-fish that have been swept out to sea.

The same psychological features are apparent in the behaviour of the Afrikaner state in the imperial and the international spheres. There is the same desire to compete, and the same misgiving lest the self-exposure which competition demands should prove humiliating ; the same eagerness to show itself equal to the standards accepted elsewhere, and the same apprehension that its psychical equipment may be inadequate to the ordeal. The mental condition closely resembles that of a nervous schoolboy sitting for a matriculation examination. Collapses of the self-confidence natural in better-known surroundings are frequent, and a forced recovery from them is generally sought in some spasm of uncouth self-assertion. Gestures like the Flag and Nationality Act, the commercial treaty with Germany, the bickerings with the Permanent Mandates Commission over the South-West Africa mandate, and the dispute over the Customs Union with Rhodesia, should be seen in relation to this psychological background in order to be understood.

After all this, it will surprise no one to learn that religion plays a great part in the Dutch life ; or, better, that the Dutch Reformed Church plays a great part in the Dutch life. Based doctrinally on the narrowest and most uncompromising Calvinism, this Church represents the Dutch mind's one triumph in self-expression—the only considerable example of collective art which the Afrikaner has yet produced. Its presbyterian system of government has kept it continuously in close touch with the more benighted laity, whose unschooled prejudices it reflects with the obedient automatism of a mirror. The same factor has made its clergy inveterate *politiques*, wielding an influence no less powerful than that of the Irish priests over the opinion of the faithful on all affairs of state. Thus, for the Dutch, religious feeling and national feeling are mixed beyond disentangling. A curiously revealing example was afforded by the famous Stellenbosch heresy trial—that surprising episode which shook the whole Church to its foundations, and in so doing exposed depths of theological and philosophic darkness probably unique in Christendom. Even the venerable superstitions of Tennessee seem to wear an air of jazz when compared with the orthodoxy of the Stellenbosch accusers. In the dock was the Reverend du Plessis, a professor of the local theological college. As one line of defence, he attempted to rebut the charge of heresy by showing that his offending opinions had been held traditionally by many authorities on Calvinistic dogma. This procedure was too much for Elder de Wet of Caledon, a tall man with

resolute features, who was one of the judges. He rose, and stoking up to a red glow the joyless pietism to which he and his peers are so much addicted, broke into a passionate mixture of confession and protest. For himself he accepted every word of the Bible implicitly as the fullest truth, both historical, scientific, and what not. What right, he asked quite simply and sincerely, had the accused to confuse the judges by quoting from all sorts of foreign books?

It was magnificent. In the voice of Elder de Wet there spoke an entire people—the authentic accent of the Afrikaner throughout the ages. The charm of it lay in two things. In its precise correspondence with the attitude of the Dutch politicians to everything and everybody reaching the country from outside; and in the constitutional inability to conceive that a point which engages a Dutchman's attention may possibly have been considered by others before him, or that the fruits of such earlier consideration might assist him in his own judgment.

Their Calvinism gives the Dutch a natural leaning towards the Old Testament. Or perhaps the matter goes deeper. Perhaps the leaning towards the Old Testament is the primary thing, and they are Calvinists because of it. The cause may be obscure, but there can be no doubt of the effect. The Dutch are, in fact, even to-day almost wholly an Old Testament people. From their many wanderings in the wilderness they have derived in some sort a sense of kinship with the people of Israel, and they feel themselves chosen of

God in the Jewish kind of way. The God of the Old Testament has been to them almost as much a national figure as he has been to the Jews. The feeling profoundly affects their whole outlook. It has meant a possibly unconscious and certainly unavowed neglect of the Christian Gospel. They have never been able to relate it as closely and directly to their own experience as the Old Testament, and they cannot help tacitly regarding it as a postscript to the main gist of the divine revelation. Thus they have never known a spiritual environment where the acknowledged principles governing the inner life were part and parcel of a specifically Christian ethic. Jehovah has always been a good Afrikaner, whom they can intimately know and serve. There is a suspicious modernism about Jesus Christ, and the Sermon on the Mount reads like pure Exeter Hall.

I recall a memorable scene in a Cape Town club, where a bold Briton, dining by chance with three or four Dutchmen, ventured to observe that Christ was a non-European and that, legally speaking, he would have been a prohibited immigrant in the Union of South Africa. The Dutchmen were so electrified at the remark that they nearly fell off their chairs ; for neither of these obvious facts had ever before occurred to them. But their little *frisson de cœur* was not set up by any sense of oddity in the laws of their country. On the contrary, they had always thought of God as so loyal a South African that they could not at once grasp His apparent failure to share their convictions on the colour question.

Surely settling the racial characteristics of an only begotten son is no light matter. The greatest care ought to be exercised. . . . The Unionists must be at the bottom of this somehow. . . .

In a word, the Dutchman is admirable as an old-fashioned family man, harsh and insolent as a politician, and a public menace as a trustee for any subject peoples. Many have found God's choice of the Jews incongruous, as a famous verse testifies. But that choice, however much it may need explanation, is not perverse and wretched like the destiny which has made the Dutchman overlord of millions of Africans and hundreds of thousands of Asiatics and men of mixed blood.

CHAPTER II

THE AFRIKANER

The human laboratory of Africa may yet produce strange results, and time alone can show whether or not the experiment was worth while in the interests of humanity.

GENERAL SMUTS

CHAPTER II

THE AFRIKANER

§ 1

The delusion persists in many places that South Africa is in some sense British. Constitutionally the country may still be a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations, though in what that Commonwealth consists and who is the judge of membership are hard questions to answer. But in every significant way it is Dutch. People often say that the question of South Africa's secession from the Empire is a "live issue" no more. If that is so, it is because in spirit and in substance secession is already an accomplished fact. The scale of values by which the African-Dutch appraise human life is now in the main accepted by South Africans of British descent ; and between that scale and all that is British in the true and distinctive sense, a gulf is fixed. The first round is over and the Dutch have scored most of the points.

The success does not satisfy them, because there are other rounds and other points still to win. They administered the knock-out to the Bushmen, the Hottentots, the seventeenth-century Huguenots, and to the later Germans ; they think they are administering it to the natives ; and they feel that they have now acquired

the habit. A section of Dutch opinion seriously hopes for the complete absorption of the local British, linguistically and otherwise. The French language, with truly Gallic politeness, died out ; the survival of English is equally characteristic bad form. But the Dutch are never very quick to tell substance from shadow. Like the dog in the fable, they are not content with one ; they must grab both. In this case, however, they scarcely realise that they have already made the main conversion, and that the local British are at one with them on the important social and economic questions of the day—on tariffs, and wages, and natives, and land. In this sphere, as well as in the sphere of moral value, the British South African's ideas are as Dutch as they could well be. Certainly if they are expressed in English, or at a time when a Union Jack is flying near by, the Dutchman at once smells a foreign taint ; whereupon he picks a quarrel about languages and flags—truly a difficult taskmaster. Here is the so-called racialism that smoulders long, and flares up now and again. But British and Dutch have given up quarrelling about things that matter.

This, then, is the first step in understanding South Africa. In essentials it is a foreign country. Wherever British forms—constitutional, legal, cultural—persist, they are for the most part mere forms. They are there, not because of any organic connection with the psychology of the people whose needs they serve, but by the inertia of long usage or by their own irrelevance to racial differences. The peculiarities of the Dutch

outlook set the dominant tone of South African society.

There is something of a paradox here. If British and Dutch are agreed upon the main lines of social, agricultural, industrial, and fiscal policy, and if the Afrikaner spirit is now endemic among the English-speaking population, what of the two patriotisms and their dividing influence? What also of the bitter opposition between the two chief political parties? What of the acknowledged Anglo-Dutch hostility that sours the public life of the country?

The contradiction is typical of South Africa. In what may be called social and political sentiment, so far as it relates to the internal affairs of the country, both sections of the white population show a solidarity four-square and virtually complete. At the same time, each section takes great pains to foster cordial antipathies, based on race-differences, against the other.

White South Africa as a whole agrees, for instance, that the gold-mines should be used as the country's milch-cow while they last, without provision against the days beyond that limit; it agrees that agriculture should be treated as the spoilt child of the family (which indeed it is); it agrees that a number of small and highly unnecessary secondary industries should be wheedled into birth by the encouragement of a protectionist tariff which bears hardly on primary industry and the consumer and which permanently jeopardises the prospects of export trade; it clasps the work-fund fallacy to its bosom and unfeignedly believes that every

immigrant from outside means one less job for the people inside ; it agrees that the Indians should be chivvied out of the country ; it agrees that the full amount of native labour desired by white employers should be made available everywhere and always, and that all "surplus" natives should be kraaled in oubliettes called land-reserves, there to be forgotten save as a possible market for white producers and traders. The degree of consent is, indeed, so large that it covers most phases of day-to-day public life. Thus political divisions are deprived of their normal and natural food, and those between the two main parties would hardly survive a day if they had no other means of subsistence. What they actually live on is not reasoned divergence of opinion but racialistic emotion. Only by violent attempts to rationalise that emotion are they sometimes made to appear genuinely political.

The two opposed patriotisms offer an example of the rationalisation process. The hedgehog outlook is properly defeatist—a real Little Afrikanerism—and as such has no kinship with an aggressive nationalism. The true nationalism is obviously the opposite doctrine, that of leadership in Africa and activity in international society generally. But Generals Botha and Smuts had preached this for years, before the Nationalist Party began to worry about external affairs, or even to think of them except in terms of the "painter" and its possible severance. The doctrine appealed to the British element, who instinctively regarded international influence and prestige as part of their birthright

as Britons ; it also appealed to a minority of more intelligent Dutch, who saw that, though South Africa might be the Afrikaner's home, it was not therefore the hub of the universe *ex officio*. In this way the hedgehog was thrust upon General Hertzog as the only emblem emphatic enough to symbolise his contempt for the Smuts-Botha party and all its works. To the hedgehog he has clung ever since. It was well in line with the tradition of Krugerism, so his followers, never conspicuous for independence of thought, did not question it. The enemy's efforts to create a patriotism wide enough to see the country in its international setting could always be discredited as a reversion to Rhodes or the Unionists or as mere paddling in the wake of the British Empire. To-day General Hertzog is just opening his eyes to the fact that a Krugerism possibly appropriate to a parcel of Boers striving to maintain themselves against the encroachments of an alien culture, looks merely comic when worn by the heterogeneous community they now control, with its assured autonomy, its rank of full-blown Dominion of the Crown, and its membership of the League of Nations. And as he opens his eyes, he sees that the larger patriotism of General Smuts would be the most telling plank in the whole Nationalist platform, if it could be nailed on to it somehow. But how ? " My people " must not be receivers of stolen goods. The matter needs careful thought. But love—or hate—will find a way.

Thus racial feeling once again creates an artificial cleavage where dispassionate thought would make,

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and in fact is making, for agreement. At the adherent of the larger patriotism the Hertzogites hurl all the darts usually reserved for the Briton. He is a foreign adventurer, devoid of the true South African spirit ; his loyalty is not to South Africa alone, but to some larger entity of which he would see South Africa as a mere fraction. It is a favourite Afrikaner trick to interpret interest in anything beyond South Africa as lack of interest in South Africa.

There is a natural and even healthy antipathy of temper between the Briton and the Dutchman. It is the root from which the present monstrous and undisciplined growth of racialism has spread, like the prickly pear, strangling all efforts at decent political husbandry. The root-feeling itself is nothing intense, nothing unmanageable. It is probably much less so than the instinctive mutual antipathy of French and English. It is little more than a century old, and the history of the century has often shown that, given sensible training, race-feeling need not imply hostility any more than it now does between English and Scotch, and can, when led into suitable canals, be used to fertilise and enrich the common life.

The impulse of retreat which Dutchman and Briton mutually feel when they first meet is slight, and the exercise of a little deliberate goodwill would make short work of it. Racialism in its elephantiac modern form arises from political, administrative, and social causes, which have been wantonly played upon for party ends. The chief of them have been four : the

methods by which the abolition of slavery was effected, the attempts to establish English as the one official language, the liberalism of British policy in native affairs, and, ludicrously enough, the social disdain in which the prevalent type of British official and resident was for years thought to hold the Dutch. The first is now so remote in time, and has so long ceased to have any reference to contemporary life, that perhaps even the great-memored Dutch may be invited to forget it. The second and third are matters which have been in the hands of the South African electorate since the Act of Union, and as the majority of that electorate is Dutch, they no longer afford "live" grounds of complaint from the Dutch side. Indeed, in every sense they are dead. The position of Afrikaans as an official language is to-day more secure than that of English, and if the present cock-a-hoop disposition of Nationalism lasts, it is only a matter of time when the Dutch will seek means of abandoning legal bilingualism at the expense of the uitlander's tongue. In native policy the mild accents of liberalism have long been rendered inaudible by the clamour which ceaselessly clangs through the three northern provinces for a white South Africa at any price. As for British social disdain, it is surely somewhat juvenile to play at constructing a political issue out of the snobbisms of the drawing-room. Perhaps with a few more years of full and free self-government the Dutch will outgrow this phase.

Meanwhile, the important point is that little in the present racial hostility is intrinsically unamenable to

judicious treatment. Racialism was at its humblest in the eighties, after the restrictions on the use of the Dutch language in the Cape Colony had been removed, after the pressure of Downing Street authority had been lightened by the grant of responsible government, and when the country was beginning to feel the surge of a wave of material prosperity. If the eighties had been followed by a generation of peace, British and Dutch might have grown effectively conscious of their latent fraternity. Unhappily, the hope of peace was broken by the Jameson Raid. The Boer War followed ; and though the country's grasp on sanity subsequently tightened enough to permit of the National Convention and of political union in 1910, the Great War came as a crushing reverse to the cause of racial amity, which has been given very little chance of recovery since. Even so, the main historical causes of racialism no longer operate, and, if the long-postponed generation of peace is at last dawning, there is no necessary reason why British and Dutch should not draw really close together, and many reasons why they should.

Generals Botha and Smuts worked for racial unity by way of a general amalgamation in which the distinctive contributions of each side should be preserved. It is a method which involves all manner of troublesome questions of equity, and demands continuous vigilance to see that delicate balances are not upset. General Hertzog also has been working for unity, but on a simpler plan. His tactical scheme fell into two stages. The first stage was "The Afrikaner must be baas."

As Afrikaner, in General Hertzog's acceptation, is synonymous with Dutchman, and as the Dutch considerably outnumber all the other whites, the first objective would obviously be reached as soon as the Dutch could be induced to vote Dutch. General Hertzog's appeal, in spite of some temporary pieces of camouflage, was at bottom one of race, and a consistent feature of his canvassing methods has been the representation of everything British in the light which he thought the Dutch would find most disagreeable. In this he had a double advantage over General Smuts. General Smuts, in the atmosphere of racial feeling which General Hertzog had fostered, was handicapped, from his own compatriots' point of view, by his British support. Also, while General Smuts was making a somewhat stern call on his people's idealism, General Hertzog was merely asking them to gratify the homeliest, and, indeed, the earthiest, parts of their nature. General Hertzog had all the natural pull which the demagogue has over the philosopher, when it comes to an appeal to the crowd. The General Election of 1929 showed that that pull has become decisive. The Dutch have swung themselves to power on a racialist wave. Though the wave sweep by, the habit of voting Dutch may remain. As long as it does so, South Africa will have Dutch rulers.

So the first stage of the Hertzogite scheme is complete ; the Afrikaner is baas. We now enter upon the second, which consists in throwing open the party gates to the Briton. Provided the Afrikaner remains baas, he

will now be prepared to accept British support. Only it must be understood that acceptance is on Dutch terms, and does not entail any modification of Dutch prejudices and policies. The advantage of this second stage is that it enables the Dutchman to testify that he is not, or is no longer, a racist. "I will never," he assures the world, "openly invoke racialism again, so long as it is tacitly permitted to maintain me in power." General Hertzog included Colonel F. H. P. Creswell and Mr. H. W. Sampson in his third ministry, not because Labour principles were to find any expression in the Government's programme, but as evidence that General Hertzog was too big a man to want an all-Dutch Cabinet.

General Hertzog, then, is anxious to obscure the racist issue at least for the present. It has served his purpose very efficiently. It has rallied the Dutch to him, and while a further display of it might whip in a few more stragglers, it would also harden British opposition against him. The shrewd policy now is to go for British converts and let the stragglers look after themselves. Therefore, if a man may not bury the hatchet, let him at least keep it out of sight.

The question is whether General Hertzog's supporters will allow him to develop this second part of his scheme. The backvelder has for many years been going through an elaborate system of tuition, the object of which was to impress indelibly upon him that the British are the root of all offence. He is very obedient to his party leaders, but he has not the nimbleness of mind suddenly,

upon prescription, to treat as his own particular beamish boy the very boggy which has so long been used to frighten him into cohesion as a national group. Not so easily can the hedgehog change his quills for the open arms of welcome. The whole, carefully organised, racist sentiment will have to lose a great deal of way before General Hertzog can round his pylon and start off on the new bearing. By the time the manoeuvre is completed, General Hertzog may perhaps be no longer at the tiller. What is more, the party managers and the Press will get a painful crack on the head from the boom as it swings over, unless they quickly learn the rudiments of the new seamanship. And these gentry, when their heads are sore, can cut up very rough and nasty indeed—far beyond General Hertzog's power of control, which, to speak frankly, is none of the firmest.

Racialism is kept in its present flourishing condition largely by the party managers and by the Press. The former can plead in extenuation of their crime whatever excuse they have for existence ; for they exist to cut the people into rival sections and to maintain their own section at somewhat larger bulk than their opponents'. Were it not for racialism, their difficulties would be considerable ; for, as we have seen, the entire electorate is in other respects almost unanimous about the major issues of the day. It is hardly too much to say that racialism is perpetuated by this very agreement on questions that are properly political. If there were other obvious principles in relation to which parties could group themselves, party managers would probably

be much readier to let racialism go. But, as things are, it is far too handy a weapon to renounce.

The responsibility of the Press is heavier and its yielding to temptation more inexcusable. Reputable journalism would not need to rely on the injurious excitements of racialism. Unfortunately, the chief Nationalist newspapers are the tools of the party managers, and their policy in racial matters is very bitter and very reckless. Their persistent outrages on the sentiments of their political opponents are less successful than they might be, because, being delivered in Afrikaans, they are little read by the British ; which is perhaps the only angle from which the duality of language, unavoidable evil that it is, can be said to be positively useful. But they are carried out extremely thoroughly, and with a disregard of all literary and journalistic manners so savage that it has to be seen to be believed. The English papers, from their side, though their polemical methods are as a rule less uncouth, are hardly less provocative. Indeed, their effect is perhaps more mischievous still, because the Dutch pay more attention to them. There is not one of their number that can be trusted to handle the other side's case on any subject with even tolerable dispassionateness. I have often heard Dutchman say that the English papers should bear the larger share of blame, since their editorial staffs, having, in general, had opportunities of wider experience and culture, ought to know better how to behave. The argument does not come well from the Dutch side ; nevertheless it has substance.

The English papers may claim that they do behave better. And so they do. But not better enough. Two things, at least, are certain. One, that the incessant racial dog-fight which goes on in the columns of the Press is one of the most discreditable features of South African life ; the other, that racialism in its virulent forms would quite quickly become extinct, if politicians and the Press would allow the people a chance to forget it. At present they torture the poor dog by never letting it go to sleep.

And so racialism goes on, strangely potent, yet, to the waking mind, strangely unreal, like a weird nightmare. To the wastefulness and mischief of its heathen frenzy no measured language can do justice. As practised by the Dutch, it always recalls the worship of Cybele in classical antiquity—a cult whose distinctive features were three : an enthusiastic excitement, amounting to madness ; starvation ; and self-castration.

§ 2

It should be realised that racialism is essentially a Dutch institution. This does not mean that the Briton does not contribute his full share to the snarling and the yapping ; nor even that the provocation leading to fresh outbursts does not often come from the British side. Still less does it mean that historically the British have no responsibility for its growth. Historically, racialism is the shape which Dutch politicians have given to the spontaneous reactions of their compatriots

to such facts as the language policy of Lord Charles Somerset, the two Boer Wars, the Jameson Raid, and the post-war Milner régime. And in so far as he provides the stimulus of those reactions the Briton is responsible. But, in South Africa as everywhere else, the Briton is a poor hater ; he much prefers to live at peace with his neighbour, and he has a real genius for finding a *modus vivendi* in situations of difficulty. The capacity has availed him little among the African-Dutch ; and that is not for want of trying, nor because he has even now set aside the hope of lasting amity.

The real initiative in racialism, and the motive force behind it, are Dutch. The truth is that the Dutch do not want friendship with the Briton. They are afraid it would mean their own Anglicisation—and this in spite of the fact that the Briton has long since conceded them every point needed for the security and entrenchment of what is called Afrikaans culture (a highfalutin term used to cover the “ taal ” and the *corpus* of Dutch political prejudices). The Briton's presence makes the Dutch feel prisoners in their own country. They represent, in a sense, an embryonic group-mind struggling towards self-realisation, and they hate to have strangers standing about, watching, and commenting, from a standpoint of maddeningly aloof criticism, upon their antics.

The spectacle of a bird beating its wings against the bars of its cage is one to stir friendly compassion in every human heart. That the bars are subjective, having no real existence outside the bird's mind, makes

the sight no less moving, and the bars even more immovable. The Briton, as he watches, feels a genuine sympathy with these inhibited aspirations. He has done much, and is ready to do more, to help to free the Dutch from their claustrophobia and from the intensity of their preoccupation with self-protection. He gives every assurance he can think of that Afrikaans culture has nothing to fear from him, and he has it fed to his own children whenever there seems to be some educational or economic advantage in doing so.

But there is no disarming Dutch apprehensions. Every line of the Dutchman's *confessio fidei* is underscored with the dark fear of social and cultural submersion in an alien sea. Every line throbs with the desire of a group, which enjoys a certain solidarity by reason of the historical and environmental peculiarities its members share, to complete the differentiation implied in those peculiarities, and to integrate itself into a genuinely distinctive type, before it is swept by the flux of time and circumstance into the universal human *mélange*. The attitude has an air, not unattractive, of desperate gallantry. But is it impossible to take it *au grand sérieux*, as the Dutchman loves to have it taken, because the terrors it symbolises are, so far as they relate to the British, entirely anachronistic? Even if they were not, it could win small praise from a judicial mind, since its crude self-assertion leaves no room for love, sympathy, or any other form of profitable human contact with anything outside the Dutch group. It is literally of the veld, as the jackal is of the veld, and it is as

anti-social as the jackal in relation to every other group but its own.

It would be indecent to exhibit in detail the workings of racialism in South African life. Some things ought to be done as privily as may be, and the evacuation of the waste products of ignoble animosities is one of them. But some general account of the feelings of both sides must be given. The Dutchman, then, in those moods of tumescence which now seem to have become chronic, cannot forgive the Briton for his association with the main line of Anglo-Saxon development. When the Dutchman came to Africa, he was running away from home. He has never been back since, and he had long disowned the European branch of his family. The British tradition, on the other hand, has always been to treat divisions of physical distance, even when they are avowedly permanent, as more apparent than real. The British colonist's share of the total British heritage is patrimony not lightly to be let go. Not only the intangible links of a common culture and outlook, but the concrete ones of familiar kith and kin, are consciously preserved for generations, and maintain in him a strong sentimental attachment to the British national home. To the Dutchman this attachment seems an unconscionable time a-dying. He finds it immoral that a man who has one sort of root in Africa should pretend to another sort of root in Europe—as bad as having a wife in every port. The Dutchman regards himself as a true transplant to African soil. The Briton sometimes regards himself as a proliferation from a European

stem. From the difference springs a world of trouble. That this feeling of effective kinship with things English does not last long, as time is measured in the lives of nations, is shown by the history of America, Canada, and Australia. It is undoubtedly steadily fading in South Africa ; and it would fade much more quickly if the Dutch did not raise such a pother at what remains of it. Its survival, indeed, has a queerly exasperating effect on the Afrikaner jingo. He makes no allowance for its being a perfectly natural sentiment common to British emigrants in every part of the world—a sentiment, in fact, which British emigrants, from the nature of their case, cannot at first avoid, whether they would or no. Instead he attacks it with the fiercest censure and abuse. He calls the Briton interloper and fortune-seeker. He reminds him that no man can serve two masters. No man can entertain a proper South African national feeling as long as any special sympathy with Britain remains. The Afrikaner's ancestry is Dutch, French, and German. But has the Briton ever heard him proclaim his faith in the culture of these countries ? No. Then if the Briton were a true South African patriot he would break with equal heroism all this equivocal continuity with derivations better forgotten. Thus the Afrikaner is driven to making a boast of his own insulation, and to arguing furiously that his poverty is a peculiarly enviable form of wealth. The paradox is so forced that this line of reproach of the Briton is usually interpreted as no more than jealousy disguised.

As to the famous social disdain of the British, it is historic rather than actual. To be blunt, there is no class in South Africa either given to meticulous analysis of social shortcomings or capable of it. Such things pass by unheeded as a threshold brook. Snobbery of the petty social kind is not a rife complaint, and where it is found, it does not seem to run on racial lines. There are, however, several features in the characteristic Dutch outlook which no civilised person, whatever his nationality, can look upon with anything but contempt—for instance, the attitude to animals and to persons of colour, and a certain deep intellectual insincerity, “the lie in the soul,” to which we shall return later. Naturally every honest Briton reacts against these, at least until he succumbs to the Afrikaner spirit; like other Calibanesque traits, they are things which good natures cannot abide to be with. The Dutch are always morbidly sensitive to criticism, and peculiarly prone to the fallacy that particular criticism implies a claim to general superiority. In the case of the subjects mentioned, even the mildest censure puts them in a great rage; presumably because their sharp ears catch the note of mixed contempt and indignation, a note which not the most saintly critic could quite keep out of his voice. There is the disdain the Dutchman so much resents, and there is the reason for his resentment.

Is this, then, all? Does nothing but a friendly feeling for England and a few superior airs divide British from Dutch? The racial question is, of course, not quite so simple as that, but the whole complicated estrangement

grows out of those two simple things. But surely people who can let such trivialities stand between them for the best part of a century must be mad ? Precisely. It is the unhappy fact that sanity makes but rare and spasmodic appearances in South African public life.

The composition of racial differences is no part of the Dutch aim. An eloquent champion of the Afrikaner spirit has written, "The Afrikaner does not want to drive anyone into the sea, but merely wishes to perpetuate his own culture, leaving it to every race or section in the country to keep its own end up. It is possible that in this desire he is being aggressive ; but, then, aggressiveness is not the monopoly of the Afrikaner." In these brief but extraordinarily revealing sentences all the main points of the Dutch political philosophy are implicit. Each section is to enjoy so much of the material and moral benefits of society as it can induce the competing sections, by barter, force, or fraud, to concede to it and can hold against them. The lion's share to the lion ; and the mouse's share to the mouse. In the interests of justice, it is equally open to mice and lions to be as aggressive as they can. This is the very argument of *Thrasymachus*.

The Dutch know they have the numbers and they are ready to fight the issue out. They are the big battalions with which God notoriously sides. That is to say, South African national feeling is not to be a compound of the feelings of the several sections composing the nation : it is to be simple conformity with the feeling of the victor in a war of those sections.

This is a principle against whose introduction the Dutch were very jealously vigilant while Britain had any word in internal policy. They have only invoked it since Union combined for them virtually complete autonomy with a majority in the electorate of the whole country. In a similar way, the Dutch talk endlessly about the true South African spirit, and complain that Britons do not share it. But what they call the South African spirit coincides in all respects with the Dutch outlook, and in becoming "truly South African" it has never been modified to accommodate any distinctive features of the British outlook. The invitation to enter into the South African spirit is thus in reality a demand that the Dutch view of life should be accepted in its entirety and exempted from criticism in future.

Of recent years the invitation has met with a remarkable response, and to-day the essentials of the Dutch outlook are accepted by all but a small minority of white South Africa. But the Dutch are not very easy in their dominance, because they are plagued by fears that it may be gradually undermined by immigration from overseas. So they resort to all kinds of dodges to neutralise the peril. Their propagation of the gospel that South Africa is nothing to the Briton, and the Briton nothing to South Africa, never flags. When the Briton testifies to a patriotic sentiment towards the land of his adoption, he is told that it is not of the proper filial type. One gathers that somewhere in the pene-tralia of the Afrikaner spirit there sits a sacrosanct jury to conduct a Trial of the Pyx and test the purity of all

denominations of local patriotism. Passionate charges are flung against the Briton that he does not regard South Africa as his spiritual home ; simultaneously great care is taken to give him no possible encouragement to do so. That is the general background. Against it, the several Afrikaner nostrums, foibles, and prejudices are loudly advertised in their detailed but not very varied lines. Public men, alive and dead, who have stood for Anglo-Dutch conciliation are systematically vilified. Once a year, and oftener if necessary, some question which will blatantly irritate British and Imperial feeling is needlessly dug up and laboriously brought to life as an urgent issue. Of such have been the controversy over the Union Jack, the repudiation of the system of tariff preferences for Empire goods, the suggested repeal of the Act of Union, and many others. The usual tokens indicate that the next one will be an attempt to lower the official status of the English language. By these methods, combined with the open preference given to Afrikaners in all appointments in the gift of the Government, whether political or in the public service or the State railways, it is hoped to make it worth while, in the crude economic sense, to be a good Afrikaner. And, since there are proportionately more public servants in South Africa than in any other country in the Empire, the hope is by no means vain. It is also hoped to make the general environment as uncomfortable as possible for any who are not prepared to subscribe unreservedly to all the articles of Afrikanerdom. Neither is this hope all

vanity. Certainly the efforts to realise it spread wide and reach deep. Even the religionists, whose Christian vows should presumably range them on the side of brotherly love, are often a main instrument of hostility. So true is this that Dr. Neville Talbot, the Bishop of Pretoria and a mild and Christian man, felt impelled to make the following lament in the public Press :

“ I wish that Dutch South Africans were more disposed to help such as me to understand. I have been allowed very little intercourse with them. The fact that I am overseaborn has been a barrier over which few have stepped. Better understanding would carry far. We have not only to understand the past but to forget it, and be forgiving about it.

“ I long to hear voices of response from the Church which, more than any other, is entitled to call itself the Church of South Africa—the Dutch Reformed Church. The fact is our South African Christianity has been submerged by racial and sectional sentiment. The note of Christian witness to what is supra-racial and supra-national has been muffled to the point of silence. Is there no hope that, on ground of common loyalty to Christ, the Dutch and British Churches should stand and move and speak together in face of the greatness of the tasks which confront this young nation ? As things are, the power of religion does little to modify the antagonisms between British and Dutch . . . the antagonism between both and the Bantu people.

"It is impossible not to feel that South Africa needs powerful agencies to be at work within its social life to redeem politics from the present degraded association of ideas in which they live in the common mind."

All such measures of what may be called peaceful discouragement of the Briton have their effect, not only on British residents, but also on prospective British immigrants. The migration-stream is, of course, very thin—so thin that the net gain to the European population by its means is only a thousand or two per annum. But its composition cannot therefore be ignored. There is a real significance in the facts that more Britons have been relinquishing domicile each year than assuming it, and that the net gain of immigrants has consisted entirely of aliens.¹ Roughly, three-quarters of these aliens come from southern and

¹ The statistical position for the five years ending 1928 may be indicated by the following table :

	<i>British Immigrants</i>	<i>Total Immigrants</i>	<i>British Emigrants</i>	<i>Total Emigrants</i>
1924 . . .	3,724	5,265	5,275	5,857
1925 . . .	3,400	5,426	4,019	4,483
1926 . . .	4,094	6,575	3,512	3,799
1927 . . .	3,681	6,596	3,717	3,988
1928 . . .	3,285	7,050	3,409	4,127
Total	18,184	30,912	19,932	22,254

Thus five years' migration resulted in :

Net loss of British subjects	. . .	1,748
Net gain of aliens	. . .	10,557

The official returns also show :

- (a) That of the alien immigrants, 7,155 came from eastern and south-eastern countries of Europe.
- (b) That the inflow from such countries has been accelerating. In 1928 the rate was more than treble what it had been in 1924.

eastern Europe, and most of them set up on arrival as small traders. Here is a direct cause of the acknowledged, and sometimes deplored, over-trading, which is a chronic ailment of South Africa's. Over-trading means that, in all the frequent periods of depression, competition between the hucksters takes on an internecine character, and becomes responsible for the low standard of "business morality" which is so marked a feature of South African commercial life. Having regard to these considerations and to the country's obvious need to develop primary industries, immigrants from the racial stocks of southern and eastern Europe have been often and authoritatively declared unsuited to the economic conditions of the country.

So far as concerns migration, then, the British proportion in the South African population has been dwindling for years, and the proportion of aliens of doubtful quality steadily rising. The process, though slow, is important. Where the total white population is still so small (well under two millions), a quite slender annual immigration can in two generations deeply influence its character.

There is a glaring contrast with the experience of Rhodesia, where, of all European immigrants since 1915, less than 10 per cent. have been aliens. That contrast is the measure of the difference in the congeniality of the two countries to British sentiment.

In these circumstances, the recent passage of an Act imposing a quota system, on the American model, is perhaps to be welcomed. No country is now permitted

to send more than fifty immigrants yearly unless it is included in the list of countries scheduled in the Act, and the total from unscheduled countries may not exceed one thousand. The scheduled countries include the British Empire, the countries of north Europe, Italy, Spain, and Portugal. Greece and the countries of southern and eastern Europe generally are not included. In introducing the measure the Union Government were probably influenced by the conclusions drawn by the United States authorities from their experience of immigration. Various "intelligence" and other tests instituted in America combine to show that the most desirable types of immigrant are British, Dutch, Scandinavian, and German. The weak point of the Act is that, although it manifests concern for the quality of white South Africa so far as to limit unsuitable accessions, it does nothing to augment the intake of the better types. This negative quality may be assumed to be its chief attraction for the Dutchman, who, as we have noticed, sees in all immigration little but a threat to his own group-supremacy, and who remains stubbornly unimpressed by Rhodes's conviction that the country's prime need is of more homes. For the rest, the particular types of immigrants against whom the Act is directed usually comprise a high percentage of Jews.

§ 3

Such, then, is the genesis of the Afrikaner, the newest and strangest product of the human laboratory of

Africa. He is neither Boer nor Briton, for he represents sometimes a physical, always a psychical, merger of both—a merger, however, in which the Boer is quite definitely the dominant element. The business world is familiar with such combinations, where an active, thrusting concern absorbs a weak competitor as a means of strengthening itself against other competition. The process is a fair simile of the welding together of Boer and Briton in the Afrikaner. They combine in order to oppose a united front to the native ; but they combine on Boer terms. Two things have in earlier years stood in the way of combination : pro-native feeling in the Briton, and anti-imperial feeling in the Boer. The first, which perhaps was never very marked in the British colonist as distinct from the British official and missionary, has been conquered by the infection of Boer panic—the panic that presents the native as a teeming, swarming enemy. The second maintains its virulence surprisingly well on very little food, but it has lost much of its power to divide the white races. The fact is that the local British are at last entering on the phase of what Jebb used to call colonial nationalism. Canada and Australia have been in it for some time, and if the South African British are behindhand, that is because they have been so much occupied in reacting against Boer nationalism that they have had small leisure to develop their own. To-day, however, it is manifestly upon them, and, although they may express it in somewhat different terms, their sense of the paramountcy of local issues and the need to be left alone

to handle them is substantially the same as in the Boer gives rise to preoccupation with sovereign independence, the right to secede, and the right to remain neutral when the King is at war. Their mental centre of gravity has shifted from the Empire to South Africa.

The Afrikaner may be taken as exemplifying the general shape that European stock assumes when called upon to live cheek by jowl with, and in irresponsible domination over, men of dark skins and less advanced material civilisation. Of what that shape is worth to the interests of humanity, time alone, as General Smuts declares, can furnish the final proof. But the following chapters may afford some indication.

CHAPTER III

THE NATIVE

The Spirit that lifts the slave before his lord
Stalks through the capitals of armed kings,
And spreads his ensign in the wilderness.

SHELLEY

CHAPTER III

THE NATIVE

§ 1

By 1870 the consolidation of the work of the “ Kafir Wars ” was complete. In the Cape the Amaxosa, who had had the great famine added to their warlike troubles, were decimated in numbers and broken in spirit. Much of their land was confiscated, and it only remained to translate their subjugation from military terms into terms political and economic. The condition of the lesser tribes, though reached by somewhat different steps, was much the same ; the best of their land was gone and they themselves were partially dispersed. Basutoland had been taken under British protection in 1868—a step which, although it annoyed the Free Staters by foiling their hopes of annexing Moshesh’s country for themselves, undoubtedly had the effect of solving their native problem for them. In the Transvaal there was so much spare room for everybody that even the Boers, comparatively free as they were from British intervention, were hard put to it to find excuses for regular war. They had to be content with ensuring the supply of the native labour they required, and with sending out commandos every year or so to chase the “ surplus ” natives into such remoter parts as they did

not themselves for the moment covet. Thus no definitive settlement was attempted. In Natal the Shepstone settlement had been working with success since 1850, and although the question of native title to land was wholly unsatisfactory, there was, owing to the smallness of the white population, so much land actually available for native use, that the natives were to remain peaceable and contented enough for nearly another forty years—and that in spite of the upheaval of the Zulu War of 1879.

Between the “Kafir Wars” and the establishment of the Union of South Africa in 1910, the natives throughout the sub-continent suffered some good at the hands of the white man, but much less good than ill. Nevertheless, the good, such as it was, was enough to keep their temper fairly sweet. The administration of the big, compact, and orderly Transkei reserve passed for a success—the sole pretext for even qualified white complacency which the whole history of native relations affords. The Ciskei, on the other hand, was no sort of feather in the white man’s cap. The mischief of the wars had been carried there beyond remedy, and by 1910 the landless and poverty-stricken dependence of the natives was already hobbling the prosperity of the eastern province. However, there was the example of the Transkei next door, and in 1910 the Ciskei natives were still hoping for better things. The political rights they enjoyed, including the possibility (and for a few thousands the actuality) of the parliamentary franchise, seemed to preclude a future of further retrogression.

This, then, was the position at the time of Union. The Cape natives came in as a reasonably reconciled and contented people, though apprehensive of the enlarged scope which Union was obviously going to give to Boer influence over their destinies. Basutoland, Swaziland, and the Bechuanaland Protectorate were delighted to stay out, as they did in accordance with the only possible decision of the British Government. Among the Zulus, and to some extent among the natives of Natal, there was a rumbling but chastened aftermath of the "rebellion" of 1906, which had been suppressed by the local whites with all the ruthlessness that small men use when they feel weak and afraid. In the Transvaal things were easier, since the Boers had left the natives in comparative peace for some years. The war with the English had given their martial ardour all the rein it wanted. Also the tribes had been so much hustled by the commandos in previous years that they were now mostly located in districts where the Boers had to fight malaria as well as kafirs. And that rather spoilt the fun. In any case, Zulus, Natal natives, and Transvaal natives alike all knew well that they could not, under Union, be worse exposed to the predatory instincts of the whites than they were as the playthings of a self-governing Natal or a self-governing Transvaal. So if they did not welcome the change, they were at least resigned to it. And there was also a chance, however slender, that in a unified state the traditional liberalism of the Cape might slightly mitigate the crudity of the white outlook in the other provinces.

To-day the native is very near the end of his tether. The last twenty years have done more to exhaust his natural peaceability and forbearance than the previous forty.

§ 2

The best types of Bantu are often described as noble savages. It is perhaps invidious to award them any palm for savagery in a land which has also moulded the Afrikaner, but of their nobility, in certain senses, there can be no doubt. The most obvious sense is the physical. In the limbs and features of the Bantu lurk treasures of exotic beauty, the richness and variety of whose possibilities western artists are only now beginning to explore. It is an unforgettable experience to stand at evening on the verandah of a veld homestead, watching the "boys" come in from their work in the fields. They gather in a group at a shed near by, some laughing their loud musical laughter, some dancing a comic, shuffling dance, others standing a little aloof, silent, meditative, statuesque. As their dark limbs glint like polished bronze in the red evening rays, the insistence of the present in time and place weakens and fades; the mind's eye of the watcher turns through many thousand years to the other end of Africa. Did not Pharaoh's taskmasters dismiss at close of day just such workers as these from the building of temple or pyramid? Did not the level sunlight glance even so from the same shining shoulders, and the same muscles

undulate with animal grace under the sleek ebony of the skin ? Did not the same steady, ruminative gaze across the plain bear witness to the same self-command in servitude ? Did not the same free laughter proclaim the mind's invulnerability by material suffering ? For an instant the heart knows itself at one with the eternal pain and joy of all the world. Then beauty pierces it again ; more blows rain upon it from the grandeur and the futility of humanity ; until, like murdered Cæsar, it swoons and falls—back into the common light of every day. And though the vision passes, there remains the recollection that the large codes of fraud and woe enacted and enforced by the Afrikaner are but a momentary impediment in the clear speech of time.

Naturally it is difficult for the white man to establish intimate touch with the native mind. Even to the sensitive and sympathetic the fundamental instinctive native point of view remains intangible darkness and little more, until perhaps they have given half a lifetime to observing the Bantu in their natural haunts. For instance, it is rare to find any phrase in, say, Zulu for which there is an exact verbal equivalent in English or Afrikaans. The native's linguistic counters are made up of different elements combined in other ways than ours. His whole apparatus alike of expression, perception, and communication is foreign to us. His root-words, like the root-ideas of which they are the symbols, grow out of a psychical environment and history so remote from ours that it is probably beyond

European imaginative sympathy to re-live any phase of Bantu experience in precisely the Bantu terms. But, after all, these difficulties concern the subtle shades rather than the broad outlines of the native character ; and most of the latter are clear enough.

The native is a happy, easy soul, who expects to find the moment pleasant and is not inclined to look much beyond it. The morose type crops up very seldom. The very large majority have an unsophisticated faith in and loyalty to life, which is the secret of the charm of the race. One might suppose that the cruelties of their own tyrants, followed by those of three generations of white domination, would have conduced to a cowed and lugubrious disposition. It is not so. Although their patience of sheer ill-usage has its limits, psychically they seem blessed with an indomitable eupepsia. Their splendid vitality and the buoyancy of their animal spirits sustain a confidence in the indefeasible goodness of the human lot against the most forbidding odds. Their laughter is this very vitality made articulate and audible. So distinctive is it that a native who did not laugh would scarcely seem a native at all. They have a great sense of rather childish fun, and can laugh uproariously at what the mature European may think very little. But they have other uses for their laughter too, and it can be curiously informative. When they laugh at a person or a situation in which they have a personal interest, a few chuckles will often imply several pages of commentary and a whole philosophy of values. And a man who knows nothing of the vernacular can

sometimes effect all the exchange of ideas he wants just as fully by a laugh or two, given and taken, as another could by speech. Laughter seems, indeed, an indispensable part of their language.

All their perceptions are clear and vivid, and, in settings to which they are accustomed, quick-arguing minds nimble and well-trained, for all their lack of "education." They are excellent talkers, and express themselves with great fluency and variety of imagery. No doubt much of the imagery is "stock" or traditional, but so was much of Homer's; and it is not the less poetical on that account. Many Bantu languages and dialects, especially those of the Zulu-Xosa groups, have a quality of music which makes them a delight to listen to as they roll forth with their trochaic lilt on the smooth, round baritone of the male voices. Nor is the music confined to language. The Bantu obviously share with the negroes a very marked general musical flair. I think much technical investigation will be needed before an estimate can be formed of their melodic gift. But it is already clear that they freely express themselves in new and virile rhythms from which western music will be glad to borrow, as soon as musicians undertake their study.

Their quickness and accuracy in judging character is well known. They are scarcely given to elaborate psychological analysis, and their judgment probably does not cover a large number of points. But on the points it does cover, it is penetrating. They distinguish between a gentleman and a guttersnipe more readily

and with fewer howlers than do, say, the members of the Legislative Assembly. They have a neat way of forming a right opinion, without prior trial, of whom they can trust. And, speaking generally, they seem to read the white man's character, to the extent and the depth to which they need to read it, more easily than he reads theirs.

As the springs of native thought differ from the white man's, so do the springs of native action. The things the Bantu most desire are not the things the white man most desires, nor are the things their consciences dictate always the things dictated by the white man's conscience. Materially they are content with very little ; they have always been poor (though not with the grinding poverty the whites have forced on them), and their wants have remained simple. But simpler means more necessary ; luxuries are almost unknown in native economy. As for the moral side, the Bantu of the kraals are scrupulous in obedience to the promptings of their conscience. True, that conscience sometimes surprises the European both in its permissive and its mandatory declarations. It may, for instance, oblige a man to walk a hundred miles to the wedding of a total stranger and to spend a week over the trip ; while it apparently allows the feeding of half a countryside from the rations supplied by a white farmer for the exclusive use of his own employees. The first example is certainly not a mere parallel with the case of the clerk who tears himself away from his official duties in order to attend his grandmother's

funeral on Derby Day ; though it may be an occasion when duty and pleasure coincide. As to the second, it should be remembered that natives share food with their friends no less freely when it is their own. Tribal tradition still exacts thus much of socialism.

But, though Bantu notions of right action may differ from ours in some of their inclusions and exclusions, there is no mutual inconsistency of a general kind. The Bantu respect courage, honesty, loyalty, and courtesy. They are at pains to acquire these basic virtues, and do so with so much success that they form perhaps the four most manifest characteristics of kraal-living natives as a class. In spite of their traditional connection with a more or less communal system, they have a clear grasp of private property, and they uphold it with considerable punctilio. They are trustworthy guardians of other people's possessions, and they fail to make use of opportunities for pilfering and similar minor lapses with remarkable regularity—a creditable neglect in which many of the European types with whom they come in contact do not follow them.

In spite of their justified distrust of the white man in the mass, the natives are ready to like him as an individual. The Afrikaner will often explain his hatred of natives by recalling that the "kafirs" killed his ancestors. The plea is, of course, even more valid from the native side. But the natives, with their sane and comparatively philosophic outlook, make little use of it. They prefer not to regard the white man as a mere

representative of the race which grievously has wronged, and is wronging, them. They look straight to his individual quality, and they judge him on it. When they like him, they will serve under him for nearly every sort of work with admirable and almost eager devotion. They are born co-operators, and they make excellent subordinate officers; for they have the knack of giving implicit obedience without servility.

The bearing of the kraal native towards his white employer is frequently a triumph of diplomacy and trained social sense. Free but not aggressive, and deferential without obsequiousness, his address rather suggests the approach of one ambassador to another. If he has a favour to ask, he asks it with just the slight hesitation that is likely to be most propitious to his cause. If he has a complaint or a representation to make, it is made firmly, but with unexceptionable courtesy. Generally, his grasp of the whole set of mental distinctions implied by good manners is much firmer than the Afrikaner's, whose social behaviour emphatically lacks grace, being much too stiff among his superiors, much too slack among his equals, and to his "inferiors" either thoughtless or offensive.

On the other hand, there are, inevitably, "cheeky" natives, as the Afrikaner calls them. Their number is probably greatly on the increase. Nevertheless, it remains as true as it always has been, that natives very rarely become cheeky until the white man has

given them good cause. In the towns particularly they do not all retain the moral refinements of the kraal in their early brightness. Townward drifts in every country have a tendency to result in the rural newcomers gravitating quickly toward the seamiest edges of urban life. In the native's case the tendency is accentuated because the urban authorities, being white authorities, make no effort whatever to arrest it, except in so far as it may become an obvious and immediate nuisance to the whites. Also, the native himself, since he is bewildered by a whole new system of life to which he is a complete stranger, is ignorant of what to cling to and what to shun in order to steer clear of the pitfalls of the town. He has to contend not only with the differences between country and town, but also with the differences between black and white civilisation. There is, so far as my knowledge goes, and with the possible exception of one or two small Church institutions, no organisation, official or voluntary, in any part of South Africa, dealing with the reception and entertainment of natives who arrive in the towns in search of employment, or even assisting them to find it.

Into their general attitude towards the world they live in the Bantu have not yet absorbed the rationalism by means of which science has won so large a control over the material environment. Their minds are still deeply imbued with animistic ideas, and witchcraft in its practical and theoretic forms alike remains to them as indispensable as it was, say to the English peasants

of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, or is to the peasants of parts of Italy and the Balkans to-day. Concepts such as that of *umtakati*¹ are saddled with all sorts of work they have no qualification for in reason, and they may seriously be used to explain any and every unforeseen occurrence, from the untimely death of the chief's daughter to the too rapid disappearance of sugar from the white man's larder.

Again, in the sphere of cosmology native speculations are perhaps immature. For instance :

" If you were to go up there like a bird, up and up into the blue, where would you arrive at last ? "

" I don't know."

" Well, what would you find ? "

" First of all, people . . . like winds or breaths."

" Have you seen them ? "

" Nobody can see them, but . . ."

" What do they do ? "

" They open the rains in the morning, and drink them in the evening. They do anything the Great-Great tells them."

" What is the Great-Great like—a white man [*umlungu*] ? "

" No, a black man [*umuntu*]. A very big *muntu*."

" Will you ever see him ? "

" Yes. When I die, I shall first of all go down there [pointing into the ground]. Then when I have become sand [or gravel], and cleaned myself, and put myself

¹ The term is very vague and inclusive, and seems to cover any kind of evil, teasing, or tricky spirit.

through a sieve, I shall go up there [pointing to the sky]. And then, after many, many years I shall return here."

All this may not be very advanced or profound. But I cannot see that it is less so than the belief in God as a big bearded fighting Afrikaner sitting on a heavy heavenly chair somewhere away behind the Southern Cross, and attended with due formality by saints in court dress, naked cherubs, and the like—which is undoubtedly what the majority of the native's white overlords hold. Indeed the native's ideas seem much nearer to a sound Platonism than the Afrikaner's to a sound Christianity.

However that may be, the main points are two. First, the innate capacity of the Bantu, both on the theoretical and the practical sides, is, so far as can be seen at present, of just the same order as that of the most civilised races. A balance of the scientific evidence available tells heavily against that flattering unctiousness, so dear to the Africaner soul, of congenital native inferiority. Present native shortcomings seem to be almost wholly accounted for by insufficient training and by want of scientific and general information. The second point is that in the kraals themselves the native mind is subjected to refining influences of the highest importance. Hitherto, the white man has apparently misunderstood or disregarded them. But they point clearly to the huge possibilities of native self-education, culminating perhaps in a comprehensive system of Bantu educational autonomy. The

white man needs to apply specific stimuli and initial guidance.

Many people think the native lazy. Even Rhodes, who was interested in him, felt miserable at seeing how much he "loafed." But it is an absurd mistake. The native certainly does not bow down before the work fetish as so many Europeans do. He does not work for work's sake. His outlook is too balanced for that. He is not the slave of work ; he uses work strictly as a means to the modest standard of material well-being with which he is wisely content. He is not dominated, as the European is, by economic motives and the gnawing acquisitiveness that is both their origin and their fleeting assuagement. He does not suffer from that ludicrous topsy-turvy puritanism which holds that a man in some mysterious way acquires merit through the feeling of strain that accompanies forced exertion, while the pleasure of a free, spontaneous activity is a sign of indolence or indulgence. He is, in fact, a hedonist, and an active one at that ; and he does not allow work to interfere more than he can help either with his education or his enjoyment.

Nevertheless, it is early days yet to canonise the native and wreath his head with haloes. He has his full share of human weaknesses, although they run on more genial lines than the Afrikaner's. Perhaps he still shines more by contrast with the other racial groups amongst whom he lives than with an absolute brightness. The native is often a maddening fellow to work for. Everyone who works for him discovers this sooner

or later, and it forms an illuminating contrast with the abiding fascination of many sides of native character. It can have been brought home to few more forcibly than to a certain magistrate who once found himself stationed in a remote district at a time of famine. A couple of Dutch waggoners were improving the shining hour by transporting maize from the nearest dorp, some eighty miles away, and selling it to the hungry "boys" at prices which any merchant of old Venice would have blushed even to hear whispered. The magistrate, while prepared to admit that he would rather see the tribes ruined than starved, felt both alternatives to be unnecessary. So he remonstrated with the Boers, suggesting that they might well moderate their extortions. But they, revolted by such arrant negrophilism, would pay no heed. He accordingly decided that his only course was to arrange for the delivery of maize himself, and to offer it to the natives at cost price. Which having been done at great expenditure of magisterial time and energy, it was found that there were no buyers. The "boys'" attitude to the low-priced commodity was, quite simply, "What's the matter with it?" Natives are not bad judges of maize, and the magistrate's maize was at least no worse than the waggoners', but its relative cheapness was so startling as to make them suspect even the evidence of their senses, and to convince them that there must be a catch somewhere. Their mistrust of the low charge outweighed their dislike of the high, and they continued to plunge deeper and deeper into debt with the Dutchmen. The instance,

which could be paralleled by many another from the social and political fields, is typical of the perplexities and rebuffs encountered by all who would deserve well of the native people. They occur partly through mere native simplicity, partly through native doubt (on the whole, perfectly well warranted) of white benevolence, and partly through a real difference of outlook between the two races.

Call the native, then, childlike, primitive, backward, if you will ; they are all permissible terms. Childlike is the best, because the native himself finds it natural to look for a paternal bearing in the white man, and the name Baba, Father, comes readiest to his lips, when he wishes to express gratitude and respect. Moreover, the father-son relation, if it were sincere, would be (for a generation or two, at least) the most excellent to unite white and black in South Africa. From one angle, in fact, it is true to say that the existence of a native " problem " at all is due simply to the white man's unfatherliness. But when you call the native childlike, remember that he seems a most promising child. As far as we can tell, he has all the powers necessary for progress in the western sense ; what he lacks is merely the special disciplines needed to transform them into settled aptitudes. In physique and in character he forms some of the most magnificent (raw) material to be found anywhere in the world. After a hundred years of merciless battering at the hands of the white man, he is still, as a racial group, the least corrupted form of humanity in Southern Africa. The gameness with which he has

stood up to punishment is superb. What might not be made of him by means of a friendship honestly seeking to unfold the best that lies latent in him ?

§ 3

It goes without saying that the Afrikaner makes no endeavour to develop this valuable asset. But his folly is not the mere folly of neglect. It is positive and dynamic with the intent perversity of mania. To frustrate native development in any and every form is, in the accountancy that springs from his unique scheme of values, the proper first charge against his energies. For he has neither enough humanity to be generous to the natives for their sake, nor alertness enough in animal husbandry to tend them for his own. He sets about the mischief with a certain sadistic zest, but the candour of his deeds does not extend to his words, wherein the sum of his vices and lusts receives the sanctimonious name of Safeguarding Western Civilisation. Actually, of course, it represents a reversion to a barbarism much more primitive than the natives'. The joke is, as we shall see, that the Afrikaner's own economic ills for the most part spring directly from the backwardness and indigence in which he forcibly holds down the huge majority of his mixed society. In the same way, his stunted spiritual stature is a function of his malevolence towards "colour."

Consider first the case of the land. It is a truism that the prime essential of the natives' well-being is a

sufficiency of land-reserves for their exclusive occupation. For two reasons the Afrikaner is concerned to see that the native reserves are permanently insufficient. One is that, in order to make them sufficient, very considerable areas at present in white ownership would have to be transferred to natives. The other is that, if they were sufficient, it would be very difficult to induce natives to leave them for menial employment under the white baas. Thus his selfish instincts, which he invariably follows, but which seldom embody any genuine shrewdness, prompt him to view the problem as one of balance. Ideally the overflow from the reserves should coincide with his demand for low-paid black labour. If the reserves are too big, there will be a labour shortage, and he may be reduced to the indignity and inconvenience of offering a higher wage. If they are too small, the labour market will be glutted ; and, although that may have a pleasantly depressing effect on wages, it will also leave on his hands a heap of "surplus" natives whom he will have no notion what to do with, and who may even be impious enough to compete with his own youngsters for employment. His attitude, in fact, is still barely distinguishable from that of the Voortrekkers, who held it to be the whole business of a native chief to parade all the black labour they might indent for, and then to make himself, with the rest of the tribe, as scarce as possible, if not scarcer.

But the balance is not easy to maintain. Indeed, for the Afrikaner it is impossible, because he so ties his hands that he cannot shift weight from one scale to the

other. On the one hand, he will not surrender any more land to the native¹ ; while, on the other, he is always trying to filch further fields of native employment for himself. Not content with having created a large class of landless natives, he is now busy creating a large class of workless natives as well—a procedure which lends a virtue of comic irony to his strictures on native laziness. He thus resembles a clumsy chequers-player, hampered in manœuvring his pieces less by enemy action than by their blockage of one another. Meantime, the mass of natives extruded from the land and from employment in industry is steadily swelling—an ugly, restless, poverty-stricken crowd, ideal fuel for disaffection to feed on.

Since the Native Land Act of 1913 Afrikaner policy has been the blatant dishonesty of the bully in the school tuck-shop—a figure, by the way, capable of affording the aptest symbolism for most of the triumphs of Afrikanerdom. The policy of the Act was ostensibly to harmonise with the recommendations of the great Milner Commission of 1903–6, namely to reserve adequate territory for the natives' sole use. While depriving the white man of the right to buy land in native territory, the Act also provided for the natural correlative of virtually prohibiting native purchases of land outside the reserves. In other words, the Act, in

¹ The phrase "more land" here is perhaps a little misleading, for it may suggest that the Afrikaner has already willingly surrendered some land. It is, on the contrary, broadly true to say that such reserves as at present exist were secured for the native only by the exertions of the imperial authorities and against the will of the colonists, Boer and British alike.

contemplating substantial additions to the previously existing native reserves, at the same time reserved to the white man the right to buy land in the rest of the country, which by a singular chance, happened to be ten times as large. In equity neither aspect of this double purpose ought, clearly, to have been carried out independently of the other. In point of fact, however, every pretext for avoiding a final demarcation of new native areas was eagerly seized by the whites, with so much success that seventeen years have rolled by, and none yet made. In all this time the native has been without either the general right, which is the prerogative of every free man, to acquire land in the open market, or the promised *quid pro quo* in the shape of enlarged land reserves of his own. Briefly, he is the victim of a common swindle.¹

The 1913 Act also aimed at putting an end to various customs in accordance with which natives were wont to farm on European-owned land. Such a stoppage could not have been made without grave disorganisation of the life of the native people, even if the promised additions to the reserves had been forthcoming. As they were not, the confusion was extreme. There was a general migration of hundreds of native families rendered suddenly homeless. Some, wandering without certain aim in search of sanctuary, literally perished by the wayside, they and their livestock. Others, perhaps the wisest,

¹ This remains true in spite of two facts which should be mentioned here : (a) the courts have held that the Act did not extinguish the right of natives to acquire land in the Cape Province ; (b) in some other Provinces, departmental officials have sometimes done what they could to soften the harshness of the legal position.

took a different risk and colluded with their white landowners to evade the law. Others, again, flocked straight to the towns, in such numbers that in some cases urban native populations were rapidly doubled, or even trebled. The immediate results were great misery for the blacks and a crop of awkward social problems for the whites. Native wages fell ; native unemployment and native lawlessness (together with its parent and its child, the illicit liquor trade) grew apace. Native competition with the lower types of white labour was highly intensified. Most local authorities found themselves confronted with slum problems on a scale which quite baffled their not very supple resources. And finally, social mixture in most unwholesome forms began to take place between the submerged strata of the European and the native people. A native writer, with first-hand experience of these events, has put it on record that "the degradation which followed is a tragedy which has no parallel in the social history of any nation. The white man and the black man were drowning, in an ocean of poverty, evil, and vice."¹ The pronouncement, whether exaggerated or not, at least shows plainly enough what the native thinks about it all.

One of the charms of the Afrikaner is that the laws of his being seem as immutable as the laws of physics. Thus his response to any given emergency can be accurately predicted. All that he understood of the emergency created by the 1913 Land Act was that there was

¹ See *The Round Table*, September 1929.

a rush of natives to the towns. Inevitably he saw only one way of dealing with the situation, and that was to close the towns to the natives, as far as might be. It did not occur to him that even natives must have somewhere to go, yet that if you turn them off the land and shut them out of the towns, the only *tertium quid* is the deep blue sea—which even in South Africa is hardly practical economics. So after the diversion of the Great War, during which the ancient pastime of native-baiting fell into partial abeyance, the Afrikaner addressed himself to the business along the expected lines, and in 1923 the Natives Urban Areas Act was duly passed. The main objects of the Act were to secure residential segregation of the natives from the Europeans inside the towns, and the control of native ingress into them. The Act has since been followed up by the Native Administration Act of 1927, a sterling measure under which, all joking apart, the Government have power to move any native from any one place to any other place for any reason at any time. These thoughtful little attentions are beautifully calculated to make the native feel at home in his own country.

In the labour market the tale is much the same. The Colour Bar Act of 1926 is too notorious to need more than a mention here. Above and beyond it, for six years the Nationalist-Labour Coalition under General Hertzog have been straining every nerve to secure the substitution of white men for natives throughout the public services, both central and provincial. Not that the policy is new—it dates back at least as far as the

early days of responsible government in the Transvaal, and has been applied in opportunist fashion throughout the country since Union. What is new is the effort to extend it systematically to its utmost limits. The Hertzog Government have even gone so far as to offer to go halves in the extra cost with provincial administrations and municipalities who would replace "uncivilised" employees with "civilised." They also hold out such bribes as they can to private employers. For instance, the match industry in Durban enjoys a special protective duty on condition that it employs the maximum of white labour ; and the Public Works Department, in accepting tenders for building works, allows a ten per cent. increase on the contract price, if white labour only is employed.

The Economic and Wage Commission of 1925 had no difficulty in showing that this type of policy was not in the economic interests of the country, and did not even conduce to maximum white employment. Nevertheless, it has been assiduously pursued, not only by official employers, but by an increasing number of unofficial ones as well,¹ and, broadly speaking, it undoubtedly has the Afrikaner's emphatic approval ; for, with characteristic simplicity, he takes the view that if there has to be unemployment, it had best be black.

It seems that, upon an average, the white unskilled worker's output in South Africa is about fifteen per

¹ By unofficial employers only when their economic circumstances enable them to pass on the increased cost to the consumer.

cent. more than the native's. His pay, which, as the great ones decree, must be such that he can maintain himself in accordance with the accepted standards of white civilisation, is more than double. In the railway service alone the total extra cost involved was authoritatively estimated at half a million a year in 1925, and it has almost certainly increased every year since. So no one can say that the Afrikaner does not pay through the nose for his racial wild oats. His exact bill, however, is not known, for the Government, flying in the face of all their competent advisers, naughtily refuse to publish, and indeed (so it is believed) to keep, any record of additional expenditure incurred through replacing white labour with black.

In many cases, for example, much of the work carried out by the Postal Department and the Public Works Department, as also often in building and road-making, it is not even claimed that greater efficiency results from employing white labour. The mere diversion of wages from black pockets into white is considered sufficient justification for the doubling of labour costs. From the native's side, this means that his white rulers are determined to do all in their power to see that he is excluded and even ejected from every field of industrial labour, save what may remain unoccupied after employment has been found for the entire white working population. He appreciates the strength of their determination when he sees that they are prepared to back it by the annual expenditure of hundreds of thousands of pounds of public money

(some of it contributed by natives), and by bare-faced infractions of the country's written constitution, the South African Act. The Act provides (section 127) that the state railways shall be run "on business principles." The extra cost of employing white railwaymen instead of black is met from railway revenues. That cost, therefore, in so far as it reflects no increased economic service performed by the white labour, is an arbitrary subsidy paid to white labour by the users of the railways. And since, owing to his unenfranchised state, the native can bring no political pressure to bear upon his rulers, he is bitterly aware of his impotence being exploited, with a malignity to all appearances unalloyed, by the very men who ought to be (and who sometimes impudently call themselves) his guardians. An illuminating example of this kind of exploitation, and of Afrikaner shamelessness about it, was disclosed in the House of Assembly on March 6, 1928, when the Minister of Labour stated that in addition to 448 Europeans, 81 natives were also being employed on rebuilding the Johannesburg railway station. He went on to add, with equal haste and insincerity, that the natives were allotted "the very heaviest work, unsuited to civilised labour, although he did not agree with that."

It is important to realise that when a Government Department displaces a native to make room for a white, nothing whatever is done to put the native in the way of other employment or in any manner to soften his fall. He is simply "fired," and no one gives

another thought to what is to happen to him afterwards. That is his business.

Brave attempts have been made by South African trade unionists to prove that white unskilled labour is more economical, in spite of the higher wage it commands. But it is doubtful if this is ever so, in present circumstances ; and, as a general contention, it is palpably false. It does appear to be true that to-day the European is usually, man for man, slightly more efficient than the native—than the native, that is, whose relative disadvantages include lack of education, lack of clothing and proper nourishment, bad pay, ignorance of his superior's language, and a very sketchy grasp of any single one of the white man's purposes. But it is also true, as the Economic and Wage Commission, with some bluntness, pointed out, that the white man's added output does not nearly compensate for the higher cost of his labour. The gap between the white wage and the black wage is still much too big for that. Consequently, the method of direct comparison has not found permanent favour. It is thought safer, if the native does not make an obvious success of the job, to insist quietly that it might as well be given to a white man ; while, when the native by energy and application plainly does well and begins to earn white man's pay, the cry goes up, " Remove him, and let us see if a white, with his superior intelligence, cannot do better." Neither argument has much intrinsic worth ; but both have their effect on employers already strongly predisposed

towards giving every practicable preference to the European.

The result is, first, that every plum, however small, in the labour market is effectually reserved for whites, and it is firmly brought home to the native that he is only to get the job that no white man wants ; second, that in the field of unskilled labour the whites are receiving more than the market value of their labour, and the native less. The Afrikaner likes that ; it is the basis of his sense of superiority.

The Afrikaner reinforces his wage and labour policies by his policy in education. This last has two main aims. One, to raise the white worker's economic value as close as may be to his cost as fixed by the wage and labour policies ; in other words, to minimise the direct loss on the whole system of preference for white labour. The other, to keep down the efficiency of the native, in order that his present low wages may be triumphantly pointed to as a true measure of his economic value. Thus, every phase of European education is paid for lavishly from general revenue, and primary education is obligatory for all white children. Native education, on the other hand, is financed solely by voluntary effort and by a small part of the proceeds of native, as distinct from general, taxation. According to the 1921 Census report, 88.58 per cent. of native children were quite illiterate. To-day a sum of about a quarter of a million is ear-marked annually by the Government for native " education and development " ; it represents, I understand, one fifth of the proceeds of

ordinary native taxes. It is fair to add that the Government allow even this niggardly allocation chiefly in order to provide themselves with an excuse for exercising control over the curricula and inspection of native schools.

It follows that the official agencies for placing the rising generation in industry, such as the Juvenile Affairs Boards and the Apprenticeship Committees, confine all their reckonings to white youths. For instance, the Committees have, as a rule, fixed Standard Six as the minimum qualification for apprenticeship. The stipulation is no hardship on the European, since education up to that standard is compulsory for him. For the natives, of whom the merest handful pass Standard Four and amongst whom hardly more than ten per cent. of children of school age are literate, it means rigorous exclusion from the apprenticeship system. Again, apprentices are required to undergo technical education. But facilities for such education are not available for natives. Instruction of an industrial character is, I believe, nowhere open to natives except in one or two institutions in the Transkei, whose chief concern is with the reserves, not with the urban labour market.

Of such a kind, then, is the wealth of paternal solicitude which the Afrikaner pours out in discharging his trusteeship of the backward races. The natives watch his damned disinheriting countenance and see that they can expect nothing more from him in the way of either adequate land, fairly paid work, or

education. Yet they remember that competent judges have held that the efficiency of the upper ten per cent. of the native population, with all its manifold handicaps, to be greater than that of the lower ten per cent. of the white population ; and a new realisation of their own latent powers stirs within them. Angry and despondent as they assuredly are, they find a certain gloomy satisfaction in the knowledge that they must fight their own battle, and in the presentiment of what, if fortune would smile a little, they might make of their cause. The Afrikaner, on his side, is able to congratulate himself on having soured a race of jovial co-operators into disgruntled malcontents. He has succeeded in steeping in misery millions of Bantu who are temperamentally almost perfect non-conductors of it. He is driving them into a political solidarity so unnatural that it cancels both the ancient feuds of Xosa and Fingo and the class-differentiations that are so rapidly forming as a concomitant of urban life—a solidarity that, for all the natives' votelessness, bodes extremely ill for future Governments. If there is pity in heaven, he has made the gods weep for the monstrous spiritual waste to which his injustices have put his victims and himself, just as he makes economists weep at the waste of man-power and productiveness caused by his colour-bars.

He has, in fact, tried the worm too high at last, and the worm is now definitely on the turn. The first form the turning worm has assumed is the I.C.U.

§ 4

The I.C.U., as the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union is popularly known, is the native's first attempt at a trades union of his own, and a portent of considerable significance. In South Africa the deep compassion of the artisan for his fellow-members of the working classes has shrivelled up to nothing before the scorching flame of Afrikaner negrophobe emotion, and white Labour, not content with mere colour-bars, has been at pains (except in the Cape Peninsula) to prevent all native participation in the trade union movement. So the native, although in one or two trades he is technically covered by the agreements made under the Industrial Conciliation Act or earlier legislation, has had to organise himself unaided, if he would not forgo all benefits of collective bargaining.

The course of the I.C.U. has run neither smooth nor very straight. Its first constitution, drawn up in 1921, was taken over almost bodily from typical English models, and undoubtedly contemplated a genuine trade union working for proper trade union ends—One Big Union, in short, of all native workers. Its early leaders were firm in their demand for co-operation, as befitted native dignity and honour, with the employing class and the dominant race. But they professed with equal firmness to come to wage no war, whether of race or class. At successive General Congresses the central principles of the movement were affirmed to be adherence to constitutional methods of action and

complete severance from Communism in all its forms. But these unexceptionable aims were not pursued without interruption. Hampered by all the weaknesses of infancy, by a fluctuating membership that incompletely grasped the purpose of the movement, and by the instinctive and wholly unintelligent hostility of the Afrikaner, the I.C.U. proved sometimes incapable of controlling its own extremists. In 1925 an amended Constitution was framed, in whose preamble were audible the clear accents of Moscow.

“The interests of the workers and those of the employers are opposed to each other. . . . No peace can be between the two classes . . . until the means of production are owned and controlled by the workers.”

There followed a phase of bitter internal struggle and contradiction. The organising secretary in the Orange Free State would publish a blustering boast that his office was full of Communist literature, the provender of his flock for months to come ; officials belonging to an opposite faction in Durban would fire back repudiating utterly the Free State brand and reiterating that the I.C.U. lived only to free itself from every Communist trammel. The battle swayed now this way and now that, until at last the moderate elements felt strong enough to import a sea-green British trade union official to be the I.C.U.'s formal guide, philosopher, and friend. Towards the end of 1928 the Bishop of Bloemfontein, whose intrepid pedestrianism is always such an example to the angels, placed publicly on

record his conviction that the I.C.U., its acknowledged aberrations notwithstanding, was now honestly pursuing the straight path of lawful trade unionism. Whether the more revolutionary passages in the I.C.U. constitution have accordingly been expunged or not, is obscure. But lovers of the established order may take comfort in the thought that the I.C.U. stinks a good deal in the nostrils of the Soviet rulers. In Moscow, when it is noticed at all, it seems to be held up to execration as the tool of the bourgeoisie and one of the chief obstacles to the spread of the Communist gospel—a very bulwark of reaction.

Laxity of control at the centre, and jealousies and peculations of dishonest officials, are apt to be the lot of a scattered organisation with a largely uneducated membership. The I.C.U. has been sorely vexed by such plagues. It has also had special difficulties of its own. They have been most marked in the rural areas. In the years 1927–1928 it was the practice of the I.C.U. to send emissaries of the hot-gospeller type to each district in turn to “run a campaign,” enrol new members, and generally spread throughout the wilderness the ensign of native industrial emancipation. But it was found that the influence of such campaigns did not long survive the departure of the organising enthusiasts. The opposition of the chiefs was fairly solid and fairly strong, for they viewed the campaigns as encroachments upon their authority, and membership of the union as a diminution of the allegiance that was their due. So they tended to reassert their hold over the

tribal "boys" with some emphasis, as soon as the I.C.U. envoys disappeared. Moreover, the native is by nature a difficult person to organise on a permanent basis, and he is the last man in the world to continue paying a subscription month after month to some distant body which he cannot see and whose achievements he cannot measure in terms of tangible profit to himself. The inclination towards inertia is heavily reinforced by the Masters and Servants Acts, the general effect of which is to attach criminal consequences to the breach of civil contracts. Under them a native who fails to observe the terms of his labour engagement is liable to criminal prosecution and imprisonment. As the Acts apply not only to native labourers, but also (in terms of Act No. 26 of 1926) to the numerous so-called squatters who are properly mere tenants and not servants at all, they operate as a severe brake on the wheel of native trade unionism, between which and, for instance, the universally conceded right to strike, a criminal barrier stands. Its best chance, therefore, plainly lies in the towns and amongst the de-tribalised worker. It is as an urban force, first and foremost, that it will have to be reckoned with. Yet even in the towns, and apart from all the European made obstacles, its progress is retarded by the general mistrust in which the native proletariat holds the educated natives who could probably be its best leaders.

In spite of these rather shaky beginnings, the emergence of the I.C.U. was a bright red rag to the Afrikaner

bull. The stimulus thus applied to the suspicion with which he always watches any non-compulsory native activity proved too much for his taurine composure, and he panicked badly both in town and country. Farmers blustered their intention of sacking all I.C.U. members from their service and evicting them from their land. And then, wondering what they would do for labour, they proposed to compel kraal-heads to vicarious responsibility for the supply of the labour of members of their kraals, thus invoking a principle both unknown to criminal law and, as it happens, expressly illegalised to the Masters and Servants legislation itself. Offices of the I.C.U. in various parts of the country were ransacked and destroyed by white hooligans in fits of brutish frenzy. Obscure peddlers of Communism and other recognised political and economic faiths were arrested on charges of inciting hostility between natives and Europeans. At the same time, Cabinet Ministers and Members of Parliament began to float irresponsibly about the country giving vent to speeches on natives and native organisations almost obscene in their barbarous offensiveness,¹ and certainly far more inflammatory of race-hatred than anything the arsenals of the arrested "agitators" had been able to produce. Strange to say, the police took no steps to check the parliamentarians.

¹ e.g. the Minister of Justice (Mr. Tielman Roos), speaking in the City Hall, Johannesburg, on November 3, 1928, remarked: "We are allowing these I.C.U. natives to go about the country insulting everyone. I am in a better position than General Hertzog, because Clements Kadalie apologised to him, but I should regard it as a most enormous insult if a native apologised to me."

The Government's official attitude, although their general animus against the I.C.U. is very plain and fierce, has never been wholly consistent. General Hertzog took the trouble towards the end of 1928 to eject his Minister of Posts and Telegraphs from the Cabinet on several grounds, one of which was that he had met a deputation from the I.C.U. before the Cabinet had had an opportunity of discussing the principle involved. The form of protest seems unequivocal enough. On the other hand, representatives of the I.C.U. have been allowed to give evidence before various Commissions ; and the Wage Board, an official, statutory body, has upon occasion directly negotiated with it in connection with the determination of wage-rates for native workers. On the whole, however, the Government have followed the Afrikaner in refusing to acknowledge the obvious fact that the I.C.U. manifests one aspect of a tide of social tendency which the white man has little power either to reverse or to arrest—that it is a natural and inevitable outgrowth from the times in which the modern native lives. They have, as ever, taken the line of least resistance and leaned back upon the Afrikaner motto, "Restrain rather than direct. It may not be so effective in the long run ; but it is less trouble now."

The organisation of the I.C.U. is not yet compact enough to have much effect in complex issues like the revision of native wages. But it has been active in taking proceedings against farmers who defraud their "boys" of their pay and practise other forms of

injustice on them. It has similarly made complaints of harsh and illegal treatment of natives in various industries and compounds in the towns. Official inquiry into many such cases has, on its own admission, discovered them to be correctly and temperately stated. In general, the evidence suggests that the I.C.U. has waged this kind of guerilla warfare with skill and fairness, and to the improvement of the conditions of native labour.

The I.C.U. is in the main the creation of Clements Kadalie, a native of Nyasaland, educated in America. For anyone who knows the material and the conditions he has had to work in, it is a remarkable monument to his ability, energy, and resolution. But the prolonged contest seems definitely to have impaired his personal vigour ; he has lately fallen foul of the police in an attempt to bring about a strike of native railway workers, and it is doubtful whether he will ever show again that strength which in old days moved something of earth and possibly of heaven too. The weakening of his influence seems bound to react unfavourably on his organisation. At the moment, indeed, the I.C.U. sprawls across the South African stage rather like the wounded snake of Pope's *Alexandrine*, or, perhaps better, like a pantomime dragon whose imperfectly drilled front and rear sections fail to mimic convincingly the unified control of life. Even so, it still has strong support both in South Africa and outside ; and, for what that is worth, it still enjoys affiliation to the Amsterdam International. It may recover and advance to new strength

and independence. It may merge itself with other non-European organisations. It may even be kidnapped and gelded by white Labour. The One Big Union idea may be dropped in favour of separate unions for each trade. Repressionist Afrikaners may succeed in suffocating it altogether. But, whatever happens to the I.C.U., it is certain that native trade unionism will endure and wax in power. In the native's mind the glimmering of what civilisation means is quickly passing into full dawn. He understands that the Europeans have built up and must continue to build up their industries on a plan which makes his own labour indispensable. So he resolves to make his employers draw the proper inferences from that indispensability. He also gathers some notion of what an uneconomic wage is, though the notion, being often presented to him overhung with irrelevant propaganda by fifth-rate whites, is not always a very clear one. That the wage he has hitherto received is uneconomic cannot be questioned ; and if he fights it, so far as he understands it, who but the Afrikaner would blame him ? His resistance is the proof of his manhood. And the I.C.U., inchoate in design and fumbling in execution though it may be, is none the less an integral part of his struggle towards the light, a moving, and therefore a memorable canto in the Bantu national epic.

*O black-skinned epic, epic with the black spear,
I cannot sing you, having too white a heart,
And yet, some day, a poet will rise to sing you,*

*And sing you with such truth and mellowness
That you will be a match for any song
Sung by old, populous nations in the past,
And stand like hills against the African sky,
And lay your black spear down by Roland's horn.¹*

¹ From "John Brown's Body," by Stephen Vincent Benét.

CHAPTER IV

THE SOUTH AFRICAN "NATION"

If citizens be friends, they have no need of justice, but though they be just, they need friendship or love also; indeed, the completest realisation of justice seems to be the realisation of friendship or love also.

ARISTOTLE

CHAPTER IV

THE SOUTH AFRICAN “NATION”

§ 1

Such, then—Afrikaner and native—are the chief groups which make up the population of South Africa. I do not deal with the Indians and the people of mixed European, African, and Asiatic blood, because I am not trying to be exhaustive, and because the problems they present, although they are important in degree and in some ways special in kind, are essentially variations upon the main colour-theme, which is most emphatically stated and most easily studied in the crashing discords of black versus white.

Clearly these groups do not form a nation, a state, a commonwealth, or a community, as the terms are usually understood. South Africa is thus a foreign country, not only in the sense that its standpoint is definitely un-British, but also in the much more radical sense that its very *raison d'être*, as an attempt at an organised society, is in contradiction to the principles on which the states of Christendom are founded. In theory, the ideal of all such states is that the capacities of every individual member should be fully developed and his wants fully satisfied. And however much the common practice may

fall short of it, the ideal really does operate as the final cause of the association of members.

In South Africa there is scarcely a trace of such an ideal, as applying to all social and racial groups. There the object of all public authorities, and, by inference, of the great majority of the electors they represent, is to extend and consolidate the differential superiority of the whites in the political, social, and economic spheres. The native is unquestioningly thought of as a mere attendant upon white convenience. When the Dutchman speaks of the South African nation, as he frequently does (and, strangely enough, in terms of extravagant pride), he means the Dutch plus so many British perverts to the Dutch point of view as they can muster. When the local British speak of it, they either acquiesce uncritically in the Dutch acceptance of the phrase, or they point to a free and friendly co-operation of British and Dutch, in which the distinctive sentiments of both are given proper play and proper respect. Neither side dreams of any politico-social scheme providing for the development of the native alongside of themselves, as a free man in a free country.

This evasion of the one big issue would not be remarkable in the numerous classes whose consciousness moves exclusively at the vegetative level. But it is remarkable that the political world should make no better showing than the lower orders. The surprising fact is that no one in South African politics has any effective conception of how to combine the diverse populations of the country into a single national whole.

Hardly anyone even asks whether such combination should be sought. General Smuts must have some systematic ideas on the subject ; for is he not a philosopher ? But his ideas do not find any place in his programme. On the all-important colour question he has never risen above the merest opportunism, and a suspicion has long been rife that he belongs to the order of statesmen whose statesmanship is not without honour save in their own country. He is generally credited with being, at bottom, no better disposed towards native aspirations than any other Transvaal Boer. None of his overt actions or declarations obviously conflicts with that surmise. It is an open secret that, when he was in office, the Native Affairs Commission spent years trying to persuade him to introduce legislation covering the same ground as General Hertzog's present Native Bills. But General Smuts, seeing, as he thought, that such a venture would weaken his party, refused with great steadfastness to embark on it, thereby enabling General Hertzog both to make much party capital out of his own handling of the question, and to lay up a menacing store of trouble for posterity. General Smuts has been fighting the party dog-fight so long, willy-nilly using the weapons of his opponents, that he seems to have sought refuge in a complete divorce of politics and philosophy within his mind. The result is that, when he enters the political field, he leaves behind him the chief part of what differentiates him from his mole-like fellow-creatures. This third-class performance by a first-class mind is a curious and, from a public standpoint,

a distressing thing. Some say, "In this unholy battle Smuts grows base." But the truth is that the real Smuts is not there. He has retired from politics. It seems safe to add that no important contribution to the native problem is now to be expected from him.

And if not from General Smuts, then from whom? The reply is an echo, and then silence. It is doubtful if a single other politician has ever seriously tried to form a rational plan of the future of South Africa as one national whole, comprising all racial groups. It is an arduous task, and nothing could be more painfully manifest than that nine-tenths of the country's politicians lack the intellectual capacity it would demand. At the same time, it is equally plain that every other task dwindles, in significance and in urgency, to nothingness before it. It is an index of the almost incredible crudity of political thinking in South Africa that no responsible party has yet begun to undertake it.

What, then, does the Afrikaner want? Does he lack even a rudimentary sense of fair dealing? Or does he merely misconceive the claims of justice? Would he say, with Polemarchus, that justice is helping your friends and harming your enemies? Or, with Thrasy-machus, that the supreme end of every man is his own gain? No doubt both these hoary fallacies find a last resting-place in the Afrikaner mind. But questionings such as these are really idle—just as idle as it is to point out that, if the tenets of Thrasy-machus and Pole-marchus were true, all rational community-life would

be impossible. For, so far as the colour problem is concerned, the Afrikaner mind is hermetically, and apparently permanently, closed. Suggest to the Afrikaner that actually good men in a good state rule, not for their own exclusive gain, but with a view to securing a communal good in which theirs has a place ; invite him, further, to apply the idea to conditions in South Africa ; and his response is to ask you how long you have been in his country¹ and whether you would like a native to marry your daughter.

The Afrikaner is incapable of studying the native problem in the light of reason, because he is afraid. He has got it into his head that the natives are his enemy culturally and materially, and not all the King's horses nor all the King's men can disabuse him of the error. So he rushes off feverishly to occupy all the strategic positions in the political and economic terrain, in the hope of pinning the natives down to ground where they must remain immobile and harmless. He dare not let them set foot on the slopes of prosperity or material power, lest in their overwhelming numbers they should swarm up, wax fat, and kick—kick him from all the perches whence he exercises his desolating privilege. His is

*the mortal sickness of a mind
too unhappy to be kind.*

¹ It is an odd disability of the Afrikaner never to be able to understand that an educated man can learn more from an experience he shares with others less educated, without having to go through nearly so much of it.

He is so desperately busy with the work of self-preservation that he cannot spare a decent thought for anyone else. In his panic he thinks that to make any generous gesture would be merely to open the way to his own doom.

His fear leads him to take a strangely materialist view of his situation. He even conceives of the "national" good as a material thing, of which it is possible for one section to have a monopoly, and of which each must have less in proportion as others have more. He is always competing for it against all comers, as though it were a boxing-belt. The notion of the social good as a form of spiritual value, only actualised when each section of an organic community performs its proper functions for the good of the whole—a wealth wherein each section shares only according as it contributes thereto—seems wholly outside his mental range. Indeed, one of the strangest marks of South African society is that its several parts are as nearly as possible inorganic to one another. Not entirely so, of course, because if disorganisation is carried beyond a certain point, there takes place a strangling of those general economic functions on which the individual depends for subsistence. And even South African prejudices will yield a little to the threat of starvation. But in South Africa the principle of the interdependence of the parts of society is regarded as a necessary evil, not as the fount of all social good, and its operation is in practice reduced to a minimum. Thus the Afrikaner turns to material weapons both in aggression and in

defence. His faith in political and economic power is absolute and pathetic. And his grasp of spiritual values is so slight that he evidently supposes they can be upheld by exercising the power in ways which in fact deny the values utterly.

Perhaps in his small, sad history he has had more than his fair share of wars. The fact, if it is a fact, may be in part the cause and in part the result of his primitive faith in violence both in the physical and the moral spheres. Whatever the reason, he is always fighting someone, and always supposing that every question can be settled by a fight.

A common boast of the Afrikaner is that he is the champion of white civilisation in a savage land. In recompense for the burden of the responsibility, he claims a certain licence ; a few incidental lapses from strict morality are excusable if they serve to maintain that civilisation in its rightful place. Now civilisation is like a rich cargo that one generation conveys to another over the sea of time. Yet the Afrikaner, when he sees the black clouds gather, straightway jettisons all his freight, and so affords decisive proof that his true concern is not for the cargo, but for the crew. Indeed, if he were genuinely interested in civilisation and the real values inherent in it, he would have no choice but to make Africa safe for it once for all by offering the eager natives a stake in it no whit less binding than his own. As things are, his "civilisation" relies for its maintenance almost entirely on the methods of barbarism.

By instinct he seems to regard the natives simply as

part of the physical environment, and so he is able to take a naïve pride in subduing whatever in them is recalcitrant to his narrowly self-regarding purposes. "Knocking the natives into shape" just resembles opening up a new area of untamed veld for white settlement, and is equally a ground for legitimate gratification. It flatters his lust for self-assertion. But the logical confusions it involves him in are proof that no form of reason is at work. The farmer complains of the inefficiency of native labour. Surely education is the remedy for inefficiency, one suggests helpfully. Good Master Hayseed's ears tingle with horror. You must not educate natives, he urges with intense solemnity, or they will be competing with whites in all manner of new spheres. Similarly, the commercial man bewails the native's meagre spending power; and similarly he shies at all talk of raising native wages. His interests as trader and his interests as employer seem to him irreconcilably opposed.

A favourite gambit of the Afrikaner, when critics suggest that his attitude towards the natives is both imprudent and indecent, is to point to the "civilising influence of contact with Europeans." It is true that in every unguarded moment he will tell you that a raw boy is worth ten "civilised" ones; but even the newcomer to South Africa soon notes such minor inconsistencies without surprise. As to the contention that mere contact with the Afrikaner does the native any sort of good, it is for the most part, needless to say, cant of an extremely nauseating kind. It is possible to admit an

element of truth in such arguments as the following, taken from the Report of the Hilton Young Commission.

"It is advantageous to the native to learn habits of regular work and to gain practical experience of what can be achieved by advanced methods of agriculture. In certain conditions also natives may be able to get a larger economic return from employment under Europeans than by working on their own account. Moreover, in the early days of British administration in such countries as the Eastern and Central African dependencies, an influx of European settlers with capital may be of great assistance to the Government in starting a process of economic development for the native. Without some external impetus at the beginning there may be no escape from a vicious circle. For while, on the one hand, measures necessary to improve the standard of native agriculture, such as the provision of agricultural inspectors, issues of seed, etc., cannot be undertaken by the Government without revenue ; on the other hand, the necessary revenue may not be available until some improvement in agricultural production is brought about. The activities of settlers who have sufficient capital to carry them through the early unproductive years may provide the necessary impetus at the start."

And again elsewhere :

"It is quite certain, for example, that nothing like the present development of the highlands of Kenya

could have been achieved without the introduction of a vigorous community of European settlers. While the development has increased the wealth of the world, it may at the same time benefit the natives, since, on the best European farms, the natives may receive, through contact with their white masters, an education more practical and more formative than anything that can be taught in the schools. Notwithstanding the difficulties to which it gives rise, white settlement provides a stimulus and example which may in the long run promote and hasten the progress of the natives."

In addition to all this, it is possible to admit that the régimes of a Chaka or a Msilikazi do not on the whole represent a high level of civilisation. On the other hand, even the guarded phrases of the Hilton Young Report beg a number of important questions. And, having begged them, they establish nothing more than that white influences may sometimes conduce to the economic advancement of natives. They ignore the fundamental points whether economic advancement is desirable, either absolutely, or relatively for the native in his own special conditions. They assume that the typical features of what is called western civilisation are good, not only for Europeans (which is unwarrantable enough), but for Africans also (which is altogether too audacious even for special pleading). Moreover, it should not be overlooked that such a system as Chaka's has some admirable features, which one day it may be

more fashionable to dwell on than it is at present. It is quite arguable that if that system, instead of being shattered by the European, had been left free to develop its inherent potentialities, the native races of Southern Africa would have been in a wholesomer and happier state to-day than they actually are. Even as things stand, if we ask whether the average of individual happiness among the natives is higher to-day than it was among the Zulus under Chaka, I think it open to grave question whether the affirmative would be the right reply. I do not suggest that the natives would now choose to return to a Chaka system if the choice were open to them. But I do suggest that, if they entertain any sentiment in favour of western civilisation, it is because they still hope to secure from it the very benefits which the Afrikaner still hopes to withhold from them.

From the native standpoint the Chaka system had one great advantage ; it was African. It carried, in fact, precisely the same kind of recommendation for the native as what they call "Afrikaans culture" carries for the Dutch. That is one reason why the claim to have profited the native by destroying his social system comes so peculiarly badly from the Dutch, who habitually seek to vindicate their attachment to "Afrikaans culture" with the plea of, A poor thing, but mine own. But of course it is a well-defined characteristic of the Dutch to practise vigorously upon others the very things which, when done by others to themselves, they most bitterly resent. For instance, they speak of the

post-war education policy of Milner as though it were an inhuman crime ; whereas it was merely a mild application to themselves of principles which they had earlier applied much more harshly to French and German immigrants, with results which they profess to regard as eminently satisfactory to all concerned.

So the discussion returns upon itself, and we can see that all the Afrikaner's relations with the native are governed by one ultimate consideration, and one alone. It is not the safety of western civilisation in the sub-continent. Still less is it the rescue of the native from his pristine savagery. It is that Afrikaner supremacy must be protected, even, as a prominent Nationalist politician has with excellent candour insisted, " at the cost of injustice to the native." That, in its naked crudity, is the final answer of Afrikanerdom to the native question. So far can Afrikaner wisdom reach. The achievement is worthy of the freckled whelp of Sycorax. It represents accurately the feelings and intentions of three-quarters of the European population, and perhaps more. Probably only one-tenth would dissent strongly enough to care to fight for a different view.

§ 2

So the Afrikaner has spoken. But his word embodies no judgment, in the ordinary sense. It is a simple, arbitrary act of will, declaring that, while Pretoria stands, no purpose of grace shall underlie Afrikaner

dealings with the black brethren, nor (shall we call it more honest or more shameless?) any smallest profession of purpose of grace. It is at once a sentence for open war, and a refusal to think about the matter any more. The hour of thought is wasted and has sped ; the hour of deeds succeeds. There is much buckling on of harness. He closes his eyes, and muffles his head ; and over his faculty of reason he pours out a spirit of deep sleep.

The gesture expresses the Afrikaner's failure of faith in himself, in justice, and in the civilisation of which he has been the deluded champion and the unconscious enemy. It is probably the definitive proof that he is beyond the possibility of political salvation.

Afrikaner political philosophy contemplates the Afrikaner as baas with the other social groups as the instruments of his privileges. Nemesis, with her admirable flair for irony, has seen that the proper way to deal with such an ideal is to realise it. As with the wish of Midas, to grant it is to visit it with fitting retribution. And so to-day the Afrikaner sits in power and in glory, enthroned above all those classes who ought to be his fellow-citizens. Being their master, he is himself mastered by his craze for mastery. *Eros Turannos* pursues him like a great winged drone, and he spends his powers satisfying at all costs one of the meanest of his appetites. Uneasy and insecure as a lord of many slaves, he must act to his subjects now as liege, now as suppliant. He is in the midst of enemies, always a flatterer or flattered, alternate dupe and deceiver, free from that ungodly equality between white and black

which the English used to try to thrust upon him—free, indeed, from equality with anyone. His will, the will of a limited and selfish man, is focused upon a single passion, a limited and selfish passion. The preoccupation chains up the rest of his faculties, and the inner man weakens and decays because there is no employment for his whole self. It isolates him from every other class, leaving him utterly alone and utterly poor—the enemy of his own best self, of the human race, and of all discernible laws of that cosmic order with which wise men seek ever to identify themselves.

Kant taught that since morality is the only thing good without qualification, and since all rational beings are capable of it, morality requires that all such should treat one another as ends in themselves, and never as means only. It may not be easy to determine the full implication of this doctrine. But it says one thing quite plainly—that for one man to use another merely as the tool of his private convenience is strictly immoral. This is precisely how the Afrikaner does use the native. Assuming, then, both native and Afrikaner to be rational beings, it follows that, so far as his relations with the native are concerned (and they are close and continuous) the Afrikaner lives in conditions of fundamental immorality.

This compromising situation affects different kinds of Afrikaner differently. The less educated types, who are inevitably a large majority, and in whom temperance of mind is neither an inherited nor an acquired disposition, succumb incontinently to the temptation

to *hubris*. By nature fitted more to serve than to command, they find themselves magically possessed of arbitrary authority over perhaps half the human beings they meet between the cradle and the grave. There must be much virtue in a white skin, they think, if it can do all this for us. So they strut about parading their whiteness, for all the world like so many Swiss admirals at a royal funeral, heedless that their vaunted uniform is a wholly meaningless symbol. If this were all, it would be matter for ridicule, and perhaps no more. But there is a curious tradition that a man offers some slight to white authority itself unless he asserts it with a special brand of harshness. Among these types it is considered bad form to show elementary consideration to a native—to give him a comfortable room to live in, or enough clothes to keep him warm, or a tolerably varied diet. The exploitation of native patience is unscrupulous, and it is one of the strangest experiences to watch all kinds of people, who in other relations are decent, kindly folk enough, putting a man to entirely pointless inconvenience, and even hardship, just because he happens to be a native.¹

¹ Dr. E. G. Malherbe refers to "the business man who sits at his office desk and rings the bell for Jim Fish, who is working in the yard, to bring him his spectacles, which lie just a little beyond his reach on the desk ; and his wife, who, while sewing, drops her thimble, and halloes in shrill tones for the little piccanin on the other side of the house to come and pick it up at her feet." Examples will occur in profusion to anyone who has lived in South Africa. They range from trivialities such as Dr. Malherbe mentions, through all kinds of objectless bullying, to cases where some punitive intention is professed, e.g. where a farmer gives his herdboys a "damned good hiding" for allowing an ox to stray across the corner of a mealie-patch. I have seen a Cape Town grocer knock a native down because he entered the shop while white customers were in it.

These are the people who, by reason of their numbers, determine both the general level of white behaviour and the general level of native expectation of white behaviour. Indefensible as their outlook and conduct is, it makes in the aggregate a very formidable body of tradition, from whose influence it is hard even for the more favoured classes to escape. No organised steps are taken to modify it, and the effect, for example, of the schools is on the whole probably to reinforce it rather than to educate it away. For South African public authorities make little reckoning of the fact that the more they fail to cultivate the true wheat in human nature, the more the tares will spring up and flourish. So true is this, so pervasive is the ambience of insolence, and so omnipresent its example, that the few children who are brought up in homes where liberal ideas abound are nevertheless poisoned by the fumes which float in from the extra-mural atmosphere. And it is hard to find any person born and bred in South Africa, however generally enlightened he may be and however favourable his personal experience of natives, who has not ingrained in him a deep-seated antipathy and contempt for black blood, as such.¹ The feeling is

¹ This understates the specifically Dutch sentiment. Mrs. Millin is no doubt right when she says: "The modern Boer may not, like his ancestor, find his justification in the Bible: 'Cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants shall he be to his brethren,' but he cannot help feeling that the kafir hardly belongs to the same order of creation as the white man. So that, in one way, he goes further than the Bible, for he does not admit the application of the word 'brethren.' And yet again his colour-feeling has something almost religious about it. He considers it to be his *duty* to hate black blood in all its manifestations." This weakness, obviously repugnant as it is to any form of Christianity, has been grossly pandered to by the Dutch Reformed Church throughout most of its history.

not always intense, but it is always capable of being evoked to intensity by appropriate stimuli. I have never met anyone who could give any rational account of it, or who seriously sought to justify it. Nor have I met anyone who seemed spontaneously to deplore it in himself. The general view, it appears, is that to be without it is a mark of ignorant simplicity.

On the type of what might in happier lands be called the best citizen, the effect of the immoral situation he is compelled to live in is more subtle. His first instinct seems to be to keep out of public life, in order that he may preserve something of his self-respect by at least a partial dissociation from prevalent policies. His mind in time becomes narrowed to his private business, and he gradually loses interest in the real political problems of his time. But the role of *idiotes* is not a great success, because it entails the sacrifice of self-respect in another way—by consenting to be ruled by worse men than himself. And assuredly South Africa suffers more even than most countries from the filling of the ranks of the active politicians by men of very inferior character and attainments. The best opinion of the country is, indeed, scarcely represented in Parliament at all.

The Rhodes scholars are perhaps the most conspicuous case in point.¹ Most of them return from Europe equipped with a training, a culture, a knowledge of men and cities, a humane outlook, which they could not have acquired in Africa, and which give

¹ The Governor-General thought the matter sufficiently important to remind Rhodes Scholars of their public responsibilities in an address delivered in March 1928.

them, it might be supposed, a special fitness for leadership in their own country. The country cries aloud for new leaders, but the Rhodes scholars, as a class, remain disappointingly mute and, it must be added, on the whole, inglorious. They become embedded, serviceably enough, in the professions and similar canalised streams of activity. The work they do as individuals is good, and sometimes eminent. But they are not the leaven in the country's intellectual and practical life that their sanguine benefactor expected them to prove. They make no organised attempt to carry on any of the objects implicit in the Rhodes scheme ; indeed, they are not organised in any way—not even as a club in a land of clubs. They will themselves confess in private that they do not pull their full weight in the public boat.

The fact seems to be that the impression left on the Rhodes scholar by his European experiences generally, and by his experience of Oxford in particular, is always either negligible or profound, according to the character of his sensibility. When it is negligible, the young man comes home, and, blending naturally with his background, never emerges from obscurity. When it is profound, he feels himself so fundamentally at odds with the uncouthness and spiritual waste of South African life in many of its political, economic, and social aspects that he cannot without hypocrisy share it, except in a superficial sense. So he too plays no leading part, and his energies become diverted from the functions for which they are most urgently needed.

The Afrikaner patriot usually seeks to fix the blame for this maladjustment upon Oxford, as the mere inculcator of out-of-place elegance and fastidiousness. It seems possible, however, that some blame may rest with the conditions of South African life. The patriotic explanation has a surface plausibility, but it does not touch the root. The root is that on receptive minds Oxford can confer a vital awareness of those ultimate spiritual values which in South Africa are tacitly ignored or openly contemned. Even in their present repose the Rhodes scholars are a "national asset," for anyone is an asset to South Africa who is not a simple sponge for the uncritical absorption of the prejudices and preconceived standards of the majority. But the fact that they do not actively join battle with the blatant barbarities of their compatriots shows the extent to which the Afrikaner virus has infected their system.

So, just as the individual Afrikaner decays in character because he only employs a part of himself, the political and social life of the country becomes impoverished both because the best men absent themselves from it as far as they can, and because the ruling classes merely restrain the subject classes without directing them.

In truth, the white man who would keep self-respect in South Africa has a hard path to tread. It is literally impossible for a responsible citizen, whose conscience retains the sensitiveness of health, to walk through any street in the country without feeling a wretched shame

of race every time he passes a swarthy face. There may be some careless people, who call their souls their own and do not know them pledged to the devil, to meet the damning indictment that the men of colour have to bring against the whites. There are many more so inured to what is vile in their psychical surroundings as to suffer from a virtual eclipse of the moral sense. Their indifference is like the indifference to harmful noise in modern cities manifested by most of those who are not called upon to think. The non-thinkers imagine that to be uncomfortably aware of such noise is a sign of a morbid pathological state, and that insensitiveness is a sign of robust health. The opposite is much nearer the truth. Sharp sensibility is normal and healthy, and it only becomes morbid when very greatly accentuated. The real invalid is he who has "got accustomed" to noise and has therefore come to suppose it innocuous. In a similar sense, most of white South Africa is in a state of moral invalidity. Even so, a large number of Afrikaners of the better sort are subconsciously irked by the weight of their guilt, and there are a few—the best—who understand its meaning and their own responsibility. Though neither class would openly admit it, the latter are at bottom miserably conscience-stricken and afraid, and the former are troubled with a corresponding unease below the level of full consciousness. At the same time, both feel bewildered by the complexity of the issue and by their own inadequacy to it. They come to nurse a grudge against fate for confronting them with riddles of death Thebes never

knew. And people—outsiders—will keep worrying them, saying how wicked it all is and asking them what they propose to do. So they get obstinate and mulish, and resolve that things can damned well stay as they are.

It is one of the Afrikaner's strangest illogicalities. Even when he knows he is all wrong, he will make no effort to retrieve his error. The facts of his situation are there. Commission after Commission has pointed them out, and he can see them for himself, out of the corner of his eye. Moreover, the facts entirely stultify the chief lines of his national policy ; nor is he without an inkling even of this.¹ But still he will not face them squarely. He has not the strength or the courage to disenchant himself of the old homely illusions and adjust his action or his thought to the plain requirements of reality. A story is told of how old Piet Joubert, Commandant-General in the Transvaal at the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War, received an offer from a Russian society to equip an ambulance. Piet declined the gift, and explained his action to a friend with the engaging remark, "You see, my boy, we Boers don't hold with these new-fangled ideas ; our *bossie-middels*

¹ A good example is the policy of a statutory colour-bar. The policy was condemned in the plainest terms by the Transvaal Indigency Commission (1906-8), the Mining Industry Commission (1907-8), the Native Grievances Inquiry Commission (1913-14), the Economic Commission (1914), the Relief and Grants-in-Aid Commission (1916), the Low Grade Mines Commission (1920), the Mining Industry Board (1922), and the Economic and Wages Commission, which reported in 1926. The condemnation was thus constantly reiterated through twenty years by at least eight independent and weighty authorities. The Afrikaner's ears, however, remained deaf to all these angel voices alike, and before the year 1926 was out he had passed a Mines and Works Act containing express provision for a colour-bar in industry and giving a wide range for its exercise.

(herbal remedies) are good enough.”¹ In the same spirit the modern Afrikaner clutches the *bossie-middel* of white privilege as the solvent of every difficulty and the panacea for every ill. He clings to his gloomy crag of time, making the most of his dominion while its lamp still rides high, and trying not to remember the oil is nearly spent and there is nowhere to replenish. Honest thinking hints at a future so dark and cataclysmal that a mere glance at it turns him giddy and sick. Soon comes a point when he cannot bring himself even to nibble at truth, and thenceforth he subsists on the slops of vulgar sophisms. Carlyle, when informed that one of his acquaintance “accepted the universe,” observed, “Gad, she’d better.” The Afrikaner prefers not to accept it, regardless of Carlyle’s implied warning. Like the Russian in a famous story, he gives a magnificent shrug of the shoulders and murmurs, “*L’éléphant ? Ça n’existe pas.*” And he sees no significance in the amusement his negation causes to natural historians. Thus, in a land where above all others there is need of the large discourse that looks before and after, the morrow is left to fend for itself. This hand-to-mouth habit of mind is largely responsible for the extraordinary sense of the precariousness of the entire white hold on the sub-continent, which assails so strongly every attentive observer of South African life.

The Afrikaner’s need is intellectual integrity. For lack of it he cannot closely engage the Sphinx that threatens his whole polity. That lack is probably a more

¹ See *Commando*, by Deneys Reitz, p. 17. (Faber & Faber, 1929.)

formidable danger to the country than his deliberate injustice and oppression. It is the very lie in the soul. It shows that he is deceived, not merely on matters of common fact and opinion, such as his own situation and the expedient methods of dealing with it, but about ultimate realities—about the respective values of truth and falsity, good and evil. Mistakes of judgment can be corrected; even *hubris* can be atoned for, or educated away by a kind of moral surgery. But there is no known method of compelling people to face life like men instead of like startled animals. The clearest proof of the Afrikaner's spiritual disintegration is his persistence in the line of guilt and danger, knowing it to be dangerous and guilty, but lacking sufficient nervous co-ordination to act on his knowledge. He says to the prophets, Turn aside out of the path.¹

¹ Dr. E. G. Malherbe read a paper on "The Poor White Problem" before the British Association for the Advancement of Science, in Cape Town, in July 1929. The paper, which proceeded on the historical and scientific lines appropriate to its subject, gave a lucid exposition of facts familiar to all competent local economists, and was acclaimed by the scientists as one of the most valuable discussions of the Association's visit. By inference, however, it inevitably exposed certain Government policies in an unfavourable light. It was therefore pursued by the Nationalist Press with a fearsome hue and cry, as being the superficial vapouring of a charlatan. The Prime Minister (General Hertzog) in the House of Assembly made some comments on it which are so infantile as to deserve quotation: "Dr. Malherbe said, 'We are a white aristocracy on a big black foundation of helots.' Where did he get that from? He made it appear as if the native in South Africa was a helot—a slave. If that was the way in which scientific men dealt with scientific subjects, then the sooner scientific men refrained from interfering in matters of that kind, the better." The example is interesting, because General Hertzog and his supporters could not have been nearly as indignant as they were, if they had really supposed Dr. Malherbe to be wrong. It is a fair sample of the general Afrikaner attitude to science when scientific conclusions cut across any cherished political preconception. The decline of human society originates in man's failure to understand the laws of his own life. A society must have declined pretty far when it refuses even to listen to the authoritative exposition of those laws.

The prophetic soul, indeed, is not popular in South Africa. The Afrikaner is wonderfully tenacious of his colour-prejudice, and there is a wonderful solidarity in respect of it among all sections of the white population. He draws his sin as it were with a cart-rope. Certainly the effect of prophetic utterances on him is invariably to increase his judicial blindness and hardness of heart. In this the condition of Afrikaner society seems very like that of Israel and Judah in the sight of Isaiah. When men have so lost their spiritual bearings that the darkness is dearer to them than the light, they are repelled and driven into deeper guilt by every fresh disclosure of the purpose or good of the order of the world. And, on the whole, the Afrikaner is probably already irredeemable. Because of the historic conflict between Dutch and British policy in native affairs, the Dutchman cannot now mend his manners without seeming to give way to the British view ; and that concession would be altogether too bitter a pill for his *amour propre* to swallow. In any case, Afrikaner opinion lags always many leagues in the rear of events. Where the natives are concerned, it has been laboriously built up throughout more than a century, and it cannot, it seems, be more expeditiously demolished. What is worse, it has been built up solely out of unrefined passion and appetite, and is thus unassailable by the intellect. No demonstration of its falsity weakens it one whit. Nevertheless, it remains a queer freak of nature that, riddled through and through by contradictions and absurdities of every type and calibre, it should have

stood so long, and should still stand with every air of perdurable solidity.

Contact with natives has, in short, demoralised the whites much more than contact with whites has demoralised the natives. Not that the Afrikaner has acquired new native vices. He has found it there more blessed to give than to take. He has preserved the outer walls of his social and economic system more or less intact. There has been no great outward change in his mode of life. But he and his system are rotting at the core. He is the man of little faith raised to the *n*th power, because he tries to defend "civilisation"—a condition whose sole reality is spiritual—with material weapons and physical violence; and he cannot see that to do so is to rob the thing he would defend at once of its distinguishing quality and the reason for defending it.

This perhaps explains why there are found so few South Africans willing to separate themselves, emphatically and unequivocally, from the sin of their generation, and to make some effort to stem or to divert the torrent of descending time. There are, of course, a few developments, such as the Joint Council movement, where wisdom and enthusiasm go hand in hand, and which are as helpful as they are creditable. But their strength is small, and they are scarcely more than voices crying in the wilderness. The prevailing attitude, even among the class of "good" citizen, is one of ignoble Laodiceanism when it is not mere acquiescence in the folly of worse men. There is nothing that

can be thought of as answering to Isaiah's conception of the "Remnant that should turn." There lies at the heart of Afrikanerism, buried within the hard shell and the husks, no spiritual kernel of faithful souls capable of being the instrument of the "nation's" redemption, no indestructible germ of true righteousness giving the prophet the assurance that in spite of outward failure his work has yet an abiding value for the regenerated race of the future.

The Afrikaner would rather not be bothered with regeneration.

So he and the native he holds captive go spinning down the stream, fatally, madly spinning together along the rapids above the great cataract, both yoked to one omnipotent hour.

CHAPTER V

KINGS AND KNAVES

You jack of diamonds, you jack of diamonds,
Now I know you of old, boys, yes, I know you of old ;
You robbed my pocket, yes, you robbed my pocket,
You done robbed my pocket of silver and gold.

CHAPTER V

KINGS AND KNAVES

§ 1

Dr. Johnson was fond of insisting that critical remarks are not easily understood without examples. The observation is very just. Hitherto I have tried to develop a general argument, and to limit concrete illustrations to the minimum required for intelligibility. It is now time to turn to more detailed description of the position occupied by the native in the South African economy.

In round figures the white population is $1\frac{3}{4}$ millions and the native population is 5 millions.

The cardinal points of the economic situation may be summarised as follows.¹ In this form they are five years old, but time has not modified their substantial validity.

The cost of living is higher than in most countries, but money wages are higher still. Real wages are much higher than in any European country, and

¹ They are set out in full in the report of the Economic and Wage Commission of 1925—a document of crucial importance in the study of South African conditions. Many of the facts and some of the arguments in this chapter are borrowed from the Report. Though they are familiar to every competent economist, they are still almost completely ignored by South Africa as a whole. So, while I claim no credit for their rehearsal here, I make no apology for it either.

lower only than in the United States, Canada, and Australia. Wages in England, for example, are 30 per cent. less, in Amsterdam 40, in Paris and Berlin over 50, and in Brussels and Milan over 60. This in spite of the fact that the total capacity of South African industry to pay wages corresponds with Germany's or Italy's rather than with Australia's or North America's.

Taken in relation to industry's capacity to pay, South African wages are far higher than those of any other country. Adult skilled wages in the urban districts are actually above the average income per occupied person, whereas in other countries the corresponding rates usually represent about half the average income.

The reason, of course, is that the South African wages taken for international comparison¹ are less typical of South African wages as a whole than the corresponding wages in the other countries with which they were compared. They are the wages of a small white plutocracy—the minority “cream” floating at the top of the wage-earning population. Four-fifths of the wage-earners in South Africa are natives, men of mixed blood, and Asiatics ; and the line between skilled and unskilled nearly (but not exactly) coincides with the line between white and coloured. Now the gap between the highest and the lowest wage-rates is several times as great as in any other country. Whereas in England the skilled

¹ The selection, however, was not arbitrary. The rates chosen were “the only rates for which comparable figures could be found in other countries.”

man has an advantage of 30 to 40 per cent. over the unskilled, in South Africa the difference is about 400 per cent. According to a statement of the Federated Chamber of Industries, the average wage per annum in manufacturing industry in 1925 was £248 for whites and £48 for natives. "In other words," the Chamber continued, "white wages have been paid, and are being paid, largely at the expense of the native workers." And the Report rubs it in elsewhere.

"The relatively high wages of white artisans are due to, and dependent on, the employment of large numbers of unskilled native labourers; and in this the artisan is typical of the whole white community, who are enabled to maintain a standard of life approximating rather to that of America than to that of Europe, in a country that is poorer than most of the countries of western Europe, solely because they have at their disposal these masses of docile, low-paid native labourers."

The average position of native wage-earners is very much worse than that of the natives in manufacturing industry. Dr. A. W. Roberts, a member of the Native Affairs Commission, has calculated that there are 1,200,000 natives employed by Europeans, and that this employment brings to the natives about £16,000,000 a year. The native workers' average earnings per head are therefore less than £14 a year.

Thus, by a form of political and economic lead-swinging, the Afrikaner continually accepts a gigantic dole from the black man whom he affects to despise, and whom he systematically abuses and defrauds. The proud white may provide the initial stimulus for the economic development of the natives, but he very soon becomes their parasite. The ethics of this procedure, to say nothing of its self-reliance, is on a level with that of a man who exalts himself from Balham to Park Lane by means of the enforced prostitution of a child. How fair is the augury of the virility of a young people freshly aglow from celebrating its entry into independent nationhood.

Since, then, the high white wages are dependent on the low black wages, it follows that any rise in either must be accompanied by a drop in the other, unless there is an increase in production per head. What, in short, the white worker has to face is that if the low wages become higher, some at least of the high wages will have to become lower.

This by itself is enough to make the Afrikaner fight to the last ditch against a rise of native wages. And if the unskilled labour market consisted exclusively of blacks, to the last ditch he doubtless would fight. However, it does not. There are not enough posts available to absorb all the white workers at the high skilled rate. The Afrikaner lives in daily terror lest the number of the unabsorbed should be found to be on the increase. His fears, of course, become the better grounded, the harder he pushes his policy of over-paying himself by

under-paying the native. The Commission drew attention to the fact that in industries where the ratio of European to native employees is higher (e.g. in the manufacturing districts of Port Elizabeth and the Cape Peninsula) the average white wage-rates are considerably lower than in the big centres of native employment (e.g. Johannesburg and Durban). The converse also is the unpalatable truth—that the way to increase the ratio of white labour is to lower its cost per unit of work done.

Apart from the urban white workers whom competition extrudes from the field of skilled employment, there are also the poor whites. Their threnody has been sung with such high frequency and eloquence that I shrink from attempting a further rendering of it here. Enough to say that they are simple, distressed, and often degenerate rustics whom somewhat complicated economic circumstances have driven off the land, and who therefore bring their labour, unskilled as it is for all industrial purposes, to the urban market. There both classes—poor white and unabsorbed skilled or semi-skilled worker—have to compete with the native at wage-rates barely sufficient for his subsistence, and often less than half what the whites have been brought up to regard as their minimum living wage. The social accompaniments of this competition are, as we saw, deplorable.¹

From such a fate, which he considers appropriate enough for the native, the Afrikaner's strong sense of

¹ Chapter III., p. 87.

colour-solidarity makes him anxious to rescue his wretched fellow-Europeans.¹ The obvious method of reason and justice alike is, as humanitarians and economists urge, to raise the unskilled wage-level, gradually if you please, but generally and without regard to colour, until it is high enough to serve as support for the indispensable white standards.

There is little doubt that the whole community would benefit by some rise in the wages of the lowest-paid labour. Evidence before the Commission showed that many wage-earners, particularly natives, were seriously short of food and other necessities. Under-fed labour is always wasteful, because it means more effort with less output from the worker. It is also wasteful in another sense, because, being cheap, it is wastefully used by the employer. The higher the wage paid, the greater inducement to managers to increase the efficiency of their organisations, to train every worker to the best of his bent, and to see that he is used all the time to what is really the best advantage. And again, each increase in the level of native wages puts up the

¹ I once had occasion to take a Dutch parson, who was also a prominent Member of Parliament, on a nocturnal tour of the Cape Town slums. The Cape Town slums are among the worst in the world, and we were witnesses that night of heart-breaking scenes of squalor, disease, and abject want. There were perhaps three European derelicts among the several hundreds of coloured people into whose tenements we wormed our way. My parson was visibly moved by what he saw. At the end, I asked him what he thought of it all. His reply was: "It is terrible. We cannot possibly allow white men to live in such conditions."

To him the misery of the great coloured majority evidently appealed merely as a filthy ditch into which a few whites had fallen. His sole instinct, Christian shepherd that he was, was to give the whites a hand out of it. To the human needs of the ditch itself it simply did not occur to him to give a thought.

value of the native market for manufactures in whose production white labour is engaged.

None of these considerations carries much weight with the Afrikaner. He would hate to be taken for a humanitarian ; and, even when he is a merchant, he prides himself on being still aristocratic enough to think of the native merely as a vassal, not as a customer. In any case, there remains the difficulty of the possible drop in skilled wages.

Resistance to that result is an over-riding consideration with the Afrikaner, governing all his policy. But if skilled wages are to be kept up and unskilled wages raised, must there not be an increase of production per head ? That sounds like more work. The Afrikaner is emphatically no hustler, and the alternative is hardly less distasteful to him than lower pay.

So he compromises. He selects the lines of unskilled work which, being less arduous, are most suitable to civilised labour—"though he does not agree with that" ; and he uses every means to lift them out of the pit of native competition and to reserve them artificially and at a differential wage for poor whites and other white workers for whom industry happens to have no openings at the skilled wage-level. Thus he thinks to have it both ways. The weaker white brethren find a sheltered nook—humble enough, it is true, yet not wholly incompatible with European prestige. The native is kept submerged where he belongs, full fathom five below the level of civilised subsistence. And,

perhaps most important of all, skilled wages are delivered from the menace of aggression.

But, like most compromises, this one only staves off the evil day and obscures the final issue. It means that industry, since the margin between the preferential white unskilled wage and the black unskilled wage is wider than the margin between white and black output per head, is made to maintain yet another section of its workers in employment at a cost in excess of their productive worth. It intensifies the encouragement already given to employers by the high skilled rates to organise production on the basis of minimum use of high-paid and maximum use of lowest-paid labour. In the long run, and over the whole field, the effect is likely to be merely that employed whites get more money than they otherwise would, not that whites as a class get proportionately more employment. Preference for white labour on an uneconomic basis involves the employer in a commercial loss which he has to recover either from the consumer or by re-organising his industry in ways that, in limiting the productive capacity of the lower-paid workers, reduce their remuneration further still. Both devices tend to diminish the output of industry as a whole, and therefore to check the growth of the funds available for the employment and payment of labour as a whole.

Worse still, the whole effort to improve the position of the white workers by restricting the opportunities of the black does nothing but precariously buttress up the ramshackle tradition—one might rather say, the

fable—of white aristocracy. It blurs the crucial fact which the white man ought to be realising with the utmost clarity : that before long the gong will sound, all his well-beloved seconds will have to leave the ring, and he will be thrust out of his corner into the open for a straight fight with the native for economic superiority—a fair field and no favour. The white man to-day ought of his own accord to be strenuously exercising himself against the day of that contest, instead of skulking in ignominious sloth into every economic dug-out he can find. In the settlement of the relative positions of the two races economic laws cannot be indefinitely defied.

“Nothing is more certain,” says the Report, “than that the restriction of the native’s opportunities of using his capacities to the best advantage will force down, or at least keep down, the level of pay for native labour and therefore for all unskilled labour ; and that in the long run the unskilled white will be paid at the same rate per piece of work done as the unskilled native.”

In the last resort, the difference between white and black earnings must tally with, and be determined by, the difference between white and black efficiency. That is the crux ; that is the dreadful truth that the Afrikaner, for all his bombast about superior white capacity, trembles to hear.

Even the white Labour movement sometimes has

a horrified glimpse of this skeleton at the feast. For example, one finds those members of the Economic and Wage Commission who professed a special concern with the employee's point of view, explaining that many of the official experiments in substituting white labour for black were practicable only because of recent years there had been some rise in native wages. The economic success of such experiments obviously becomes easier the smaller the difference between the wage paid to the displaced black and the wage paid to the displacing white. By such suasions are these Commissioners brought to a vision of the truth that "the economic position of the native must be raised or the unskilled white man must go down to the native's standard of living." The words echo with charming unanimity the doctrine enunciated by their "capitalist" colleagues, "The disparity between skilled white and unskilled native rates is so great as to constitute a danger to the white. In the interest of the white, it is necessary to raise the economic level of the native."

That pronouncement, indeed, ought to be to the unawakened Afrikaner the trumpet of a prophecy. It is literally South Africa's economic New Testament. It implies, however, as the Report does not fail to point out, the corollary that the main agency in raising the native's economic level must be the widening of the scope of employment open to him. There might then be a fair chance of increasing unskilled wages without diminishing the skilled rates, by drawing off to the

former a part of the increase in wealth "which is normally to be expected in a civilised society." To this increase the more efficient organisation of the lower-grade employments, and the enhanced personal efficiency of the low-paid workers themselves, might make an important contribution.

A few of the Labour intelligentsia may have seen, as in a mystic trance, that "native economic uplift" is the password to salvation. But, like most mystics, they have not been able to share their experience with the rank and file. Or, if the rank and file have somehow absorbed the knowledge, they manifest the usual Afrikaner inability to grasp it effectively and act on it. At any rate, white labour and the Afrikaner at large have spared no pains to prevent the native from securing any of the jobs which alone could enable him to rise in the scale of civilisation. The more telling of their stratagems have already been mentioned. But we should remember, too, that the elaborate devices for excluding the native from every desirable form of industrial employment operate in concert with a protective tariff system which raises the price of manufactures consumed by him. In effect, this conjunction puts a special tax upon him in order to subsidise an uneconomic employment of Europeans.

It only remains to add that the primary industries, mining and agriculture, working, as they do, very close to the margin of payability, and being unable to compensate for increased costs by raising the price of their products, are, almost as a matter of course, opposed to

raising the wages of natives or anybody else. White labour is also, on the whole, similarly opposed to raising unskilled wages, because of its fear of a resultant fall in skilled wages. The triple combination is politically very powerful, so that no Government is likely to countenance much in the way of economic uplift for the native until such time as the bargaining power of the native workers is strong enough to insist on it. That time is not yet : and, before it arrives, the country's extremely unstable economic organisation is likely enough to have collapsed at some other point.

§ 2

These circumstances bear harshly on all natives who go out to work for white employers. But the pressure is harshest on the class called " detribalised " ; that is to say, the natives who no longer enjoy any rights in the reserves, and who therefore seek to make a permanent home within the borders of the white man's industrial system.

The numbers of the detribalised are not accurately known. Indeed, it is characteristic of the Afrikaner's " scientific " approach to the native question that all the statistics concerning the native population are hopelessly defective. In spite of the Economic and Wage Commission's powerful plea that the Government should undertake a complete survey of the economic position of the native people, it is still—five years later—impossible to obtain exact information

as to that position in any part of the country. And all the demographic scares which, since the 1921 Census Report, have presented the native as a hydra-headed menace, and which have lent so unhappy a stimulus to repressionist policies, are but frail thoughts dallying with merest surmise. However, it is known that the natives fall into three main economic classes, and the best estimate of the relative strength of each seems to be as follows :

1. Natives having permanent homes in the reserves, $2\frac{1}{2}$ millions. Of these, probably half a million spend an average of six to nine months a year in urban or agricultural employment with whites.

2. Other rural natives who live as squatters or labour-tenants on white-owned farms, 2 millions. As a class they are, for reasons which we shall notice later, highly immobile, and they enter the white man's labour market comparatively little, except to discharge their obligations (as farm hands) to the "masters" on whose land their homes are situated.

3. Detribalised natives, living permanently in the towns or in urban locations adjoining them, about 300,000—and probably more rather than less.

The conditions of life of the detribalised native are, in many ways, the most wretched and depressed of all. First, he is quite landless and, practically speaking, without any prospect of acquiring a stake in the land. This in itself means a complete revolution from all his

traditional modes of living and habits of thought. It also means that he is shorn of those safeguards, which the reserve native at least partially enjoys, against the worst forms of wage and labour sweating by white employers. He has no alternative to urban life (which may end at any moment through unemployment or ejection by white authorities), except a return to rural serfdom as a squatter on the white man's land. Even that alternative is very problematic, for he may find no farmer who wants squatters.

This lack of a base on the land is the most crushing of the disabilities of the detribalised. To the reserve native, since he has such a base, the time-factor is not always of prime importance in his search for employment. He is able, at least temporarily, to decline an unjust contract, and that endows him with an additional bargaining power. In this aspect his land-base has the same kind of value as membership of a trade union. In another, it operates rather like a reserve of capital, since it renders breaks in employment less formidable. It is, again, a form of insurance against sickness and old age, thus benefiting also the whole tax-paying class, which it saves from much of the burden of poor-relief. Finally, and most important, it ensures an occasional respite from the aridity or squalor of life in slums, or compounds, or locations. Such a respite is essential to the moral health of the native people. It is as essential as rest-billets are to trench-fighting troops. The native wage-earner takes most of the shock of impact between the alien western culture and his own, and, in making

the inevitable transition to western customs, he emphatically needs a sanctuary among familiar surroundings and familiar folk, where he can digest in peace his unsettling experiences and come, in his own time, to new and fitter terms with himself.

The detribalised native is twice unlucky. For not only does he miss these advantages of the reserves, but he is compelled to bear the weight of their sole disadvantage. The reserves may be trade union, capital, health insurance, old age pension, and moral sanctuary for the native who has a share in them ; but they are more. From the standpoint of the white employer they act as a grant-in-aid of wages, because they make it possible for the reserve native to work for a wage below what would otherwise be the practicable minimum. The detribalised native naturally cannot charge a special rate for his service, and has no choice but to accept the same wage as the reserve native, at whose hands he thus suffers just the same sort of competition as the white man complains of from non-European workers generally. This wage, "while it may be sufficient for the sustenance of the native worker and his family, who can supplement it with the produce from his land in the reserve, is quite inadequate for the maintenance of the detribalised native and his family, who have no other means by which they can augment it. It was suggested to us by the witnesses representing the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union that a considerable amount of native crime in the towns was due to these inadequate wages. We were informed by

Mr. Welsh, Chief Magistrate of the Transkei, that in that territory—with a population of about a million—there was very little crime. . . . The position of the detribalised native is one of great gravity. A people who do not receive sufficient of the necessities of life to exist are driven to extreme measures such as crime or revolution.”¹

The skilled trade unions do not admit natives to membership ; and, broadly speaking, there are no unskilled unions in the country, except the natives’ own, the I.C.U. So, apart from what that imperfectly articulated body can do for him—it amounts to very little so far as general wage-levels are concerned—the native worker has no protection against the perils of individual bargaining. As one Chief Inspector of Labour has pithily put it, “ So far as the natives are concerned the only method of settling wage-rates appears to be that employers determine what they will pay.” In addition, the detribalised native’s wages are artificially depressed both because colour-bars and white labour policies block all outlets to the better jobs, and because the reserve native is, in effect, undercutting him all the time. It is beyond question that the detribalised native as a class is so badly fed, clothed, and housed that he cannot maintain his physical strength. Higher wages would, in his case, mean a direct increase in bodily capacity. This, in turn, would mean increased production, which would, within limits, offset the rise in pay.

¹ Economic and Wage Commission Report, pp. 282–3 and 325.

However, it seems otherwise to the Afrikaner. And the result is the grimy thing of shreds and patches, who slinks shiftily about the towns hunting for a job, drinks skokiaan and smokes dagga in his spare time, is apt to be cheeky to white men that go out of their way to annoy him, and indulges in a little soap-box Communism on the Parade at week-ends and on bank holidays.

His only compensation is in whatever of excitement or mental stimulus he draws from town life and urban contacts. He learns something of the white man's language, sees how he lives, and absorbs something of his desires and ambitions. He becomes obscurely aware of the itch to interfere which is the secret of western progress, and possibly at times he feels the temperature and the motion of world-ideas and world-tendencies that rise up like steam from places where many mortals are herded together. And so you may see him about the streets on Sundays, in fawn-coloured Oxford trousers and wasp-waisted jacket, his air sub-aggressive and his gait jaunty—quaint emblems, perhaps, of his defiance and his hope.

CHAPTER VI

THE LAND

The steady, unhalting march of a great mass of the native people, and their near proximity, to a crisis of a desperate nature in their affairs ought to be envisaged by the Government.

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CHAPTER VI

THE LAND

§ 1

The natives are so tightly interlocked with the European industrial system that the average percentage of white employment is only 36, and the maximum 70. In spite of this, they remain to a very large extent an agricultural and pastoral people, and of their total of 5 millions roughly $4\frac{1}{2}$ live, in some sense, on the land. Of the land-living natives, as we have seen, $2\frac{1}{2}$ millions have homes in the reserves ; the remaining 2 millions live as squatters or labour-tenants on white-owned land.

The lot of the reserve native is not yet an altogether unhappy one. He knows, at least, that none better is open to his race in South Africa. He can live the clean life of open air and sunshine to which his mind is by age-long custom attuned, and can taste in quiet ease its golden, uncontrolled enfranchisement. The white man does not worry him. He has his own folk round him, and he follows their ancient, homely ways. In good years when the crops prosper, he may even enjoy a brief period of plenty.

But his Arcady is perpetually haunted by one spectre.

The wolf of want is never far from his door. Year in and year out, the meagre purchases he makes to satisfy

his simple needs outweigh the produce of his land. And, besides purchases of clothes, blankets, and food, there are taxes and cattle-dipping charges to meet and if it can be managed, children's education to pay for. To supply the deficit, he has no choice but to sell his labour in the towns. So it happens that an average of half the able-bodied males are permanently absent from their homes, working in white employment. It is an entire misapprehension to suppose, as many people who ought to know better still profess to do,¹ that a native will leave, say the Transkei for the Johannesburg mines for the mere fun of winning a little pin-money. He goes, as a general rule, simply because it is impossible for his community to pay its way by any other means.

In 1926 the Union Government invited Professor W. M. Macmillan to make a sample survey of conditions in the Herschel district of the Cape Province, which they themselves selected. His report was not published ; but he has divulged in the Press some of his more important conclusions. For example, "a generous estimate suggested that, with little or no evidence of saving or hoarding, the spending or consuming power of a district of 40,000 inhabitants was no more than £3 per head per annum, and that for half or more of this meagre amount the district depended not on its own production, but on wage-earning outside." Evidence

¹ For example, General Smuts in his Rhodes Memorial Lectures states : "Even for those natives who have ample land for their own needs, it soon becomes customary to go out to work for part of each year in the mines or industries or the neighbouring agricultural districts. No inducement is necessary beyond their ordinary growing economic needs."

given before the Select Committee on General Hertzog's Native Bills supports this analysis, and tends to confirm Professor Macmillan's belief that similar conditions obtain generally in the reserves, without obvious exception. He further declares the evidence to be conclusive that in the last ten years conditions have altered for the worse. Statistics collected by Dr. James Henderson of Lovedale in relation to the district of Victoria East—a district typical of the Ciskei as a whole—repeat the tale of worsening circumstances. They show that in 1925, although more than two thousand bread-winners left their homes to enter employment, the money spent with the traders was over £1,000 less than in 1875 ; and that purchases of food-stuffs rose from 20 per cent in that year to 63 per cent. in 1925.

The more favoured portions of the Transkei are not so hard-pressed as that ; nor, on the whole, is Zululand. But “ the solid and incontrovertible fact remains ”¹ that the reserves barely keep their end up in the struggle for subsistence, that they do so only with the aid of wages earned outside, and that conditions in them are steadily deteriorating.

The reserve native who treks to the towns in search of work finds on arrival there, as we have seen, that his base on the land is a valuable stand-by, giving him several distinct advantages over his permanently urbanised brother. But its power is limited, and other factors come in to prevent him making full use of it as a

¹ General Smuts (Rhodes Lectures) affirms : “ The solid and incontrovertible fact remains that native progress in South Africa under white rule has been quite unprecedented.”

buffer between himself and an unduly depressed wage. He is not in the habit of starting his trek until economic pressure at home is severe, so that his margin of time for bargaining with prospective employers is small. He needs work quickly. Even if he did not, there are too many sellers of unskilled labour in the market for him to succeed in holding up wages. He soon sees that he can scarcely afford to pick and choose, and that his chance of a quick job depends on undercutting his competitors. So the pull his land-base gives him becomes applied to that purpose. Once again, circumstances cheat him of the full economic reward for his services. At the same time, his expenses are continually going up. Prices for commodities are roughly 70 per cent. higher than fifteen years ago. But average native earnings, for example, on the gold mines (which are among the most conscientious employers) have increased by only 13 per cent., and even that increase is chiefly due to the introduction of piece-work. The Economic and Wage Commission Report stated that there had been no increase in real wages of natives engaged on time-work ; indeed it is plain that such real wages have appreciably fallen. A specially heavy import duty has in recent years been imposed on blankets for the native market in order to protect one of the white man's "bastard" manufactures. As regards education, it costs £20 a year nowadays to send a boy to Lovedale ; twenty years ago it could be done for £2, and thirty years ago for nothing. Not only are the old wants dearer to satisfy, but new wants, engendered

by the native's share in the white man's life, keep slowly cropping up. The result is that he is becoming poorer all the time. Therefore, to compensate, he must increase the number of his working months. This in turn means that the tillage of his fields suffers ; consequently the yield of crops becomes smaller and more uncertain. Finally, the lengthened periods of menial drudgery in the towns strengthen the temptation to squander what he earns. And, as often happens also in better regulated circles, not all of father's income goes to enrich the family.

His position as a farmer within the reserves is even more dismal than his position as a worker without. The salient conditions, which are familiar to every competent student, have been well summarised by Dr. Henderson. They are : (1) the decline of agriculture, manifested in the exhaustion of the soil by continuous cropping, accompanied by worsening tillage due to the absence of able-bodied men. (2) Deterioration of the commonages through overstocking, large areas becoming entirely denuded, yet the overstocking representing little value and contributing little to the sustenance of the communities. (3) The recurrence of drought and the absence of measures to conserve rainfall. Forty-four years of complete records for Victoria East show only twenty years of assured food crops. (4) A congested population, in which the struggle for food alone has become so severe that the birth-rate barely balances the death-rate, and the capacity of the community for supplying the healthy, able-bodied

workers, on whose wages alone its existence is being maintained, is steadily declining.

The class of natives who live on white-owned land fall into two sub-divisions. First, there are the labour-tenants. In return for the right to live where they are (often on their ancestral land which has been sold over their heads, but in whose occupation it happens not to have served the white man's advantage to disturb them)—in return for this right plus the right to plough a little land and graze some head of stock, they are required to render 90 days', or in some districts 180 days', labour-service to the master who owns the land. The period of service does not necessarily run continuously. If the master needs their labour for longer, he is supposed to pay them wages in respect of the excess-period at the current rates. A tenant cannot now legally contract to supply the labour of other members of his kraal, but as a matter of practice his master frequently calls upon him to turn out wives, sons, daughters, and piccanins to work without pay; owing to the extreme insecurity of his tenure it is hardly feasible for him to turn a deaf ear. For it is open to the master to evict him at any time for any reason, and he can therefore only stay as long as he "agrees" with his master.

The second sub-division comprises the squatters. Their general situation is much the same as that of the labour-tenants, except that they are without any definite contract. They occupy the land on sufferance, either paying a money-rent or furnishing their service

and that of their households, as and when required, without pay. As a class they are now legally extinct, since the law forbids natives to hire land from Europeans or to engage in "share-farming" with them, and has imposed on squatters the status of "servants," thus bringing them under the criminal sanctions of the Masters and Servants Acts. In law, therefore, there is no distinction between squatters and labour-tenants ; but it survives in practice, because the law is largely set aside ; and it should be mentally preserved in considering the position of the farm-natives as a whole.

Squatters and labour-tenants, when they are decently treated, their contracts reasonable, and their relations with their landlords friendly, are often contented enough—not less so, probably, than the natives of the reserves. Their life under an easy master is assuredly the best that any South African native, without land of his own, can hope for. But their entire well-being depends on the master's caprice. In many cases there is no doubt that their circumstances are oppressive. For instance, a favourite device of European farmers on the high-veld (it is said that as many as 60 per cent. of them indulge in it) is to buy cheap, inferior, fever-stricken land in the low-veld and to put landless native families on it as labour-tenants, with the sole purpose of having a private reservoir of native labour to draw on when the big crops come in. Sometimes, again, natives are laid under contract to work their 180 days "one fortnight on and one fortnight off," which means that they are tied to the farm the whole year round, and can

never leave to earn money in the towns. Others still put up with fraud and harsh treatment merely because, finding themselves perhaps on good land in a good rainfall area, they dare not abandon it to seek their fortune in they know not what quarter of the Afrikaner's extremely inhospitable world.

Scattered up and down the country, divorced as a rule from the corporate life of the tribe, rarely reached by influences of church or school, the farm-native is as a class perhaps the most backward, if not the most wretched, of his kind. He has neither the power, owing to the small amount of land available for his use, nor the inducement, owing to his wholly precarious tenure, to do more than eke out a bare living. As the country becomes more closely settled by Europeans, and as rising land-values impress on white farmers that they cannot afford to give up fields and pasture for native use, he is concurrently being driven, via the least desirable areas, off the land altogether. There are tribal and administrative difficulties in admitting him to the reserves ; and, even if these were overcome, the reserves could not absorb him. Their congestion is grave enough already. Thus he drifts gradually to the towns. But until the moment of final expulsion from the land arrives, he is almost a complete stranger to them. As long as he has a perch on the land, he is virtually tied to it, often because the landlord sprinkles the days of his labour-contract discontinuously over the whole year, always because to leave the women and children alone on the farm is to heighten the ever-present danger

of eviction. It is much safer to attend, *in situ* and in person, upon the master's wishes. Occasionally he escapes for a few months' domestic service in a town by his favourite trick of working alternate shifts with another "boy" from the next-door kraal. But, generally speaking, industry and the mines know him not.

We have seen that the reserve native hardly succeeds in making both ends meet, even with the wages he can earn in white employment. The farm-native must make shift without that invaluable subvention, and he has not the use of more or better land. We should thus expect to find his economic plight even more parlous than the reserve native's.¹ What the exact facts are no one knows ; and no one will know until the Government undertake the general economic survey of native life to which for five years and more they have been repeatedly urged. But all available evidence bears out that expectation. And Professor Macmillan, who does not rush to irresponsible conclusions, has felt able to

¹ It should be remembered that agriculture in South Africa is not on a cash basis, or even on a wage basis. Even when he is nominally working for a wage, the native, be he squatter, tenant, or reserve-man, rarely sees his full wage in cash. He frequently buys food for his family, and extra food for himself, from his master. Most white farmers also do surreptitious and unlicensed general dealing with their "boys," much to the annoyance of the store-keepers. Some even consent to do "contract-ploughing" for natives on or near their land ; and they charge the equivalent of six weeks' wages for a patch of a couple of acres, which represents the use of the master's animals and implement for a single morning. All such transactions, which naturally take place at a profit to the farmer, are treated as advances on account of wages. It not seldom happens that the native receives no cash throughout his engagement and finds himself in nominal debt to his employer when it ends. When there is a balance due to the native, it is often paid over irregularly or late, and sometimes not at all. It is also worth remembering that stock-theft, habitually called the native's besetting sin, is most frequent in localities where native land-congestion is worst and wages lowest.

declare : " It comes to this, that the masses of native people living in the reserves are very near subsistence level, while the two millions on the farms are almost below it."

It is acknowledged on all hands that the whole labour-tenant system is hopelessly wasteful and unsatisfactory. None other perhaps could be quite so barren of opportunities and incentives of native progress. Should it not for this reason command the Afrikaner's warm approval? Doubtless. On the other hand, it obviously encourages bad and lazy farming among the whites, gives them unwilling and inefficient " hands," and immobilises more than a third of the total native labour force of the country. On these grounds, the Afrikaner is, in his wisdom, prepared to condemn it.

§ 2

The Union Government's new Native Land Bill proposes to permit natives to acquire land in certain additional areas which total approximately 7 million morgen.¹ If the whole of these additional areas were to pass into native hands, the general apportionment of land in the Union between whites and blacks would then be as indicated in the following table :

		<i>Whites</i>	<i>Blacks</i>
Cape	(morgen per head)	108.1	4.3
Natal	"	47.2	2.6
Transvaal	"	45.0	3.7
O.F.S.	"	73.6	0.3

¹ A morgen is roughly two acres.

Over the whole country there would be 17 million morgen for 5 million blacks, and 126 million morgen for $1\frac{3}{4}$ million whites. Calculating, again, on the basis of the rural population alone, there would be 187.3 morgen per rural white, and 4.1 morgen per rural black. But there is every likelihood that, if and when the Bill passes Parliament, the areas now proposed to be opened for native purchase will have been sensibly reduced.

The Afrikaner calls this giving the native a square deal. To others it does not appeal as a very impressive monument to white scrupulousness ; still less as a tribute to white good sense.

Admittedly the position of the native on the land he at present occupies is capable of much improvement. His farming methods need to be modernised by means of systematic instruction ; the indiscriminate distribution and use of land which are the present accompaniments of communal tenure need to be carefully overhauled ; organised stations for agricultural experiment and demonstration need to be established ; and, most of all, large sums of money need to be spent on development works.

In many parts of the country, the possibilities of development of land in native occupation are considerable. In Natal, on the Tugela and Mooi rivers, there are two irrigation works for native small-holders, which have enjoyed marked practical and financial success. Their construction was financed, in consequence of an Act passed by the Natal Parliament some

thirty years ago, by means of debentures raised on the security of the land itself. The schemes have met their obligations throughout, and to-day many of the holdings are producing £30 per annum per acre. Such yields, in comparison with those of ordinary tillage in the reserves, are almost fabulous, and they are probably as high as the yields under most white irrigation schemes in the country. Experiments in Natal with sugar-culture by natives are no less encouraging, and some natives in the coastal belt are producing tens of thousands of tons of cane every year. These examples are all small-scale undertakings, but at least they show what the white man can do for natives (incidentally to his own great gain), if he sets his mind to it.

It is also admitted that a mere statistical statement of relative acreages does not necessarily reflect with complete precision the fairness or otherwise of the division between white and black. The Afrikaner was rudely shaken by the figures in the table quoted above, when they first appeared. He thought, and everyone agreed with him, that they looked pretty criminal. His first instinct was to head them off from publication. Being too late for that, he fell back on the complaint that they had been prepared merely to discredit him in the eyes of the world. Eventually the prickings of his conscience drove him to arguing that the natives occupy all the land where conditions of soil and climate are most favourable, and that therefore to express the allocation in terms of mere surface measurement is gravely misleading. The fact, of course, is that

native land, like European land, is a mixture of good and bad. When it is good, he occupies it by virtue of some historical accident which happens to have allowed him to stay there, not because he has been able to select the good for himself, or because anyone else has troubled to select it for him. It would be strange indeed if the white man, who for many decades hustled him hither and thither across the country, had habitually left him in possession of the most covetable parts. Nor, in truth, has anything of the kind occurred. Nevertheless, the Afrikaner is, if he prefers it, quite entitled to adopt a unit of measurement which comprehends the factors of rainfall and fertility as well as that of mere extent. But if he applies it impartially to European as well as native land throughout the country, it is unlikely to present the comparison in an importantly different light. And, even if it did make the count appear somewhat less unfavourable to the native, it is clear enough that a monstrous disproportion would still remain. The only people who dispute this are white landowners, and their representatives in Parliament and in the Press.

Further admissions still can be made. The native's capacity to make beneficial use of the land is perhaps, as the Afrikaner claims, no more than 10 per cent. of the white man's. Again, for the white man provision has to be made in respect of immigration as well as of natural increase—though immigration does not seem likely to play any large part in the economy of the Union. Even the contention that the ratio between

European and native holdings is of less significance than the question whether the native's power to acquire land corresponds with his foreseeable needs—even this we may let pass. Due weight ought to be given to all these considerations.

But when all is said and done, when every possible allowance has been made for every possible extenuating circumstance, the apportionment remains utterly indefensible on any grounds of equity. Indeed, on such grounds I have never heard its defence seriously attempted. Even the members of the Native Affairs Commission, in generally sponsoring the Government's Bill, admit that the 7 million morgen of "released" areas do not make possible an increase in native holding at all commensurate with native needs. The Bill is defended merely as "expedient," which, being interpreted, signifies that Afrikaner opinion is not prepared to see the native's right to acquire land extended beyond 7 million morgen (and probably not as far).

The whole business looks even shabbier when it is seen in the light of the 1913 Land Act. Before 1913 the native could acquire land anywhere in the country, except in the Orange Free State, where the old Dutch law still ran, and in certain municipalities that had restrictive clauses. The Act took away that right (except in the Cape, where, by a legal miscarriage, it failed of its intention). At the same time, a clear undertaking was given to open certain areas, definable later, to native occupation alone. It is of that undertaking,

unhonoured so long, that the present Bill poses as a belated fulfilment. That the areas offered would be grossly inadequate has always been fully expected by all who knew their Afrikaner. But the Bill upsets even the understanding as to exclusive native use. The areas it "releases" are, in fact, simply areas in which the native is now to be allowed to buy land in competition with the white man. There is no curtailment of the white man's rights in relation to them. It is certain, therefore, that a large part of them will never pass out of white hands. Further, other parts, substantial in size, are already in native hands. To suppose, then, that the "release" of 7 million morgen means 7 million extra morgen for native use, is a very unsophisticated error. But it is an error into which much of native opinion has no doubt fallen, and will continue to fall.

The impression of sharp practice which the Bill thus conveys is strengthened by the fact that it is being used as a means of bargaining with the native for the surrender of the Cape franchise. Whether or not the Land Bill and the Franchise Bill are formally regarded as interdependent, it has been made abundantly plain that the native will not get his land rights until he has parted with his equal political rights.

The main object behind the Bill is to encourage improvement in European farming by shaking the farm-natives off their perches on European land into the reserves and the new areas. Politicians profess to attach the utmost importance to such a "measure of territorial segregation," and even in responsible

quarters it seems to be seriously believed that some result of the kind can be achieved by means of the Bill. Territorial segregation may or may not be economically and socially desirable. But the present measures are quite powerless to secure it. Dr. Loram of the Native Affairs Commission has shown that, on the basis of the Eastern Transvaal Land Committee's estimate of $18\frac{1}{4}$ morgen as the minimum necessary for the maintenance of a rural native family of five, the reserves and the released areas together would give room for 4,650,000 natives—say $4\frac{1}{2}$ millions, allowing for those parts of the released areas which will remain in European possession. That leaves half a million natives still unaccounted for, and no margin for any increase.¹ The figures, of course, prove nothing ; but they do indicate that no great extension of segregation is practicable with the amount of land available for native use. The essential point is that, if the existing reserves are called upon to absorb greater numbers than at present, whether by natural increase or by influx from the farms, the standard of living will soon fall below subsistence level. And, although 7 million morgen is a biggish area, it will not much affect the position of unmonied natives who can only enter it by buying their way in.

¹ It was solemnly argued before the Economic and Wage Commission that there was no point in making over more land to the natives, because, even if this were done, the growth of the native population would make it necessary to repeat the performance a few years later. The Commission replied, a little tartly, "It is no excuse for refraining to-day from remedying a crying evil, because next year you will not have the means of remedying a similar evil."

It is true that with radical improvement in the methods of utilising the reserve lands, their productivity could be considerably increased. But that improvement would take at least a generation to effect ; and even then it would probably be reflected in the maintenance of something like the present numbers in better circumstances, rather than in the maintenance of much larger numbers in the same circumstances. Dr. A. W. Roberts made this point in evidence before the Select Committee.

“ If more intensive cultivation were undertaken in the native areas, the land would not produce infinitely more. It might produce two or three times, but not more than five times as much ; but that can only come in time. And it will not mean that the land will then carry five times the population it is carrying to-day. It would not carry more than it is carrying to-day because the natives are living on the edge of starvation, and if you get five times the population the conditions will be just the same as now. The more the natives produce, the more their wants will increase ; otherwise you have no improvement at all. I do not think that with intensive cultivation the areas will carry a greater population than to-day.”

In short, then, the Bill shirks any radical handing of the real agrarian issues. It has a certain importance, because it is being used as a fulcrum to prise the native out of the equal franchise in the Cape, and since it

may temporarily and partially allay the native land-grievance, by leading simple-minded natives to suppose that they are being presented with 7 million new morgen. But it is a very minor contribution to the solution of any aspect of the native problem, which, indeed, it leaves almost exactly as it finds it ; and regarded as amends for the long swindle of the 1913 Act it is laughable.

§ 3

Much land now in white possession could be transferred to natives without affecting the prospects of white production, employment, or prosperity in any period to which human prevision extends. If the Afrikaner's heart were in the matter, it would still be feasible even to secure quite an effective measure of territorial segregation of the natives. It has been reckoned that the 7 million morgen of "released" areas could be expropriated, lock, stock, and barrel, for 10 to 15 million pounds. The whole area would then be really available for native use, and it would go far towards accommodating the 2 millions of farm-natives at present living on European land. There is no need here to discuss by what financial means such a sum could be raised, though the huge abnormal revenues which the Government have been receiving from wasting assets like the gold and diamond industries, and which for the most part they carelessly apply to ordinary current

expenditure, suggest obvious possibilities. But wholesale expropriation is far too heroic a remedy for the Afrikaner. He is ready enough to spend some millions of exceptional diamond revenue on grandiose schemes of irrigation settlements for poor whites—schemes covering “many thousands of morgen in the Cape, Free State, and Transvaal.” But to pour out as much and more also on a large operation which, while no doubt in the long run of benefit to the European community, would be immediately and obviously advantageous to the Bantu—no, that is too much. Besides, who ever heard of compulsorily shifting white men to make room for natives? Preposterous!

In chanting its cry of Not Another Acre to the Native, common Afrikaner opinion makes great play with arguments as to the “beneficial” way the white man uses the land, and as to the consuming quality of his land-hunger. As a matter of fact, the white man’s use of the land is still almost incredibly inefficient; and if he learned to increase the productivity of what he has got, his appetite for more might lose some of its edge. The Drought Commission of 1924 showed that owing to the ineptitude of his farming methods the desert conditions of the Karoo were steadily spreading outwards over the whole country, like the ripple from a stone thrown into a pond. The outstanding features of Afrikaner farming are that yield per acre, return per occupied person, and density of farming population are all extremely low in comparison with other countries. In 1922 the output per person occupied in

agriculture was £420 in Australia, more than £300 in Canada, and £80 in South Africa. On the showing of a recent Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, this crippling difference is not primarily due to any natural ills, climatic or entomologic, that South Africa is heir to, since it is also discernible in areas unvisited by drought, insect pests, and disease. The main reason was said to be that "a great proportion of our farming is backward farming; the low output is attributable to relatively inefficient methods." Output being so low, it follows that production costs are high. And, owing to the absence of any coherent roads policy, the channels between producer and consumer are needlessly multiplied and complicated, with the result that distribution costs are high also. The 1921 Census Report observed that the difference between the farm price and the wholesale price of agricultural produce was about 18 million pounds; and added that "the difference between the wholesale prices and retail prices, where ascertainable, indicates a still wider margin of prices."

These factors conspire both to strangle attempts at closer land-settlement and to drive the weaker type of farmer off the land. They demonstrate that in a country to which, not being rich in natural resources as compared with other "new" countries, the economical use of the soil is of the first importance, the soil is actually being used in grossly wasteful fashion. Expert opinion seems agreed that mineral wealth cannot go on being drained as copiously as it has been, and that

therefore prudent policy should seek agricultural expansion as a basis of a subsequent growth of secondary industry. Increased farming output, both absolute and relative, is a pre-requisite of economic health. Yet under present methods the countryside cannot even absorb its own natural increase of whites—and that not because of any land shortage, but simply because profits are so precarious and so small. Irrigation may help ; but South Africa has no big rivers, and in practice irrigation can only assemble the rainfall of large catchment areas and feed it to relatively very small patches of land. In the main, it has hitherto been little more than a device for subsidising agriculture from general revenue ; for very few irrigation works have reached full financial success. Even the maximum development of irrigation could not provide great numbers with access to the use of the land. That object, as Professor J. W. Grosskopf emphasised in a paper read to the British Association in July 1929, can only be attained by a thorough revision of the laws and policy dealing with land, its ownership, and its use.

While such general revision is still to seek, it is clear that General Hertzog's Native Land Bill by itself can have but small significance in relation to the realities of the agrarian question.

CHAPTER VII

EBB OR FLOW?

Sarie, Sarie, quite contrary,
How does your garden grow?

CHAPTER VII

EBB OR FLOW?

IN his world-renowned presentation of the native as The Enemy, the Afrikaner relies much on the boggy of overwhelming numbers. One gathers from his lurid word-pictures that the fertility of queen-ants or Australian rabbits is as nothing to the Bantu's. The poor sand-castle of white civilisation is doomed to be swiftly engulfed by the rising tide of colour, unless—what? Well, no one seems quite to know. But let us say, Unless the Afrikaner has better luck than King Canute did with that other tide. Meanwhile, the proper course is plainly to block every line of advance that we can think of and lay our hands to, and generally to make fools of ourselves in the old Canutish way. Probably the Minister of Justice is already engaged in drafting a Sterilisation of Natives Bill.

The fear which disreputable demagogues thus play upon is highly volatile and inflammable. It forms perhaps the largest single element in the Afrikaner's case-hardened hostility to the native, and it is the main impulse behind all the blindly repressive measures of the last twenty years. Nor are the demagogues alone to blame. Acknowledged authorities seem to support them. Lord Olivier says that the natives increase in

numbers faster than the whites.¹ General Smuts declares that the native population has been increasing faster in the Union than in any other part of Africa for the last fifty years. Even the solemn and official Director of Census, who ought not to be a demagogue and certainly has not the air of one, rushes in *ventre-à-terre* to lead the hue and cry. The combined effect has made white South Africa unwholesomely nervous of a growing numerical predominance of black over white.

Such a fearful fillip was given to this nervousness by the 1921 Census Report, and the pendulum of South African opinion shows so few signs of swinging over the opposite way, that it seems in point to draw attention to certain considerations which that Report overlooked.

At only three censuses has the enumeration of the native population been undertaken, those of 1904, 1911, and 1921. The following table shows the percentage of the European and the native populations respectively in the total population at each of these.

	<i>European</i>	<i>Native</i>
1904	21.6	67.4
1911	21.4	67.3
1921	21.9	67.8

¹ It is not clear whether he means that their percentage rate of increase is higher, or merely that in a given period the addition to their numbers forms a larger aggregate. The former is certainly not the case. The latter may be, since 1 per cent. on 5 millions gives a bigger total than 2 per cent. on 1½ millions. But in present-day conditions it seems at least on the cards that the white man's advantage in rate of increase may balance his disadvantage in initial numbers.

The 1921 Report explains that the larger European proportion in 1921 was probably due to the fact that non-European losses in the influenza scourge of 1918 were out of all proportion heavy—500,000 as against 10,000 Europeans. Had conditions been normal the European proportion would have fallen to about 20.6 per cent. Since then, the 1926 Census has been taken. It did not include a fresh enumeration of the natives, but it indicated that the European proportion was being well maintained.

The white population doubled itself between 1871 and 1891, and again between 1891 and 1911. If the same rate had been maintained, there would have been nearly a 50 per cent. increase between 1911 and 1921. Actually that period shows an increase of only 19 per cent., "a retardation too significant to be ignored."

Such figures as were available in regard to natives indicated that their increase had been about 70 per cent. for 1891–1911. For 1911–1921 it was 16.9 per cent., a retardation, it would seem, to be devoutly thankful for.

Evidently the percentage increases are favourable enough to the white man. But it is a different story when percentages are translated into actual totals. It then appears to be by immigration alone that the white man has managed to maintain his proportionate strength. The Report calculates that, excluding immigration and its consequences and allowing for a liberal rate of natural increase among whites of 2 per cent. per

annum, the whites have only added 500,000 to their numbers during a period in which non-Europeans have increased naturally by more than $2\frac{1}{2}$ millions (five times as much). So in another fifty years from 1921, even assuming the whites do as well as in the previous thirty and the non-whites as badly as in the previous ten, $6\frac{1}{2}$ million whites will be ducking down before a tidal wave of $16\frac{1}{2}$ million non-whites. Or rather they would be, but for the certainty of a loud social and economic explosion long before the fifty years are out. The disturbing forces, the Report concludes with charming meiosis, "will not necessarily operate in favour of the white race."

The whole argument is an excellent cautionary example of what can happen to figures when their handling is not strictly insulated from political—I will not say motives, but thinking. It is a clear case of scare-journalism wholly out of place in a blue-book.

The peril of such explosions as the Report anticipates need not be discussed at any length. Manifestly 16 million blacks cannot be segregated on 17 morgen of land ; nor would most of the present colour-barricades of industry have much chance against black battering-rams of such weight. But the explosion-danger is not inherent in black numbers, but in white stupidity. If the latter continues to prance along its primrose path as now, the existing demographic position is quite capable of supplying the explosion. On the other hand, given rational statesmanship and a proportionate increase in the national wealth, there is no obvious reason why $16\frac{1}{2}$

million blacks should prove more difficult of management by $6\frac{1}{2}$ million whites than 5 million are by $1\frac{3}{4}$ million.

In any case, the probability of the black population increasing to $16\frac{1}{2}$ millions by 1970 is exiguous in the extreme. Certainly the seventeen years covered by the three censuses of 1904, 1911, and 1921 are far too short a base-line for so very long a projection. Moreover, the two earlier censuses scarcely pretended to accuracy where natives were concerned, and the 1921 Report itself, in the same breath in which it hazards that projection, laments the uncertainty and incompleteness of their data "in their distinction of race." We have, in fact, little knowledge of the first essential in the calculation of the native rate of increase, namely the original native numbers in the various areas which came gradually, by piecemeal colonisation, under white control; nor do we know anything of the rate of increase in those areas before the whites took them. The estimates the statisticians have worked on are admitted to be uncertain and incomplete; which implies that, not having covered the whole ground, they are underestimates. Indeed, from the nature of the case, error hardly could lean to the side of too much; the uncertainty consists in the inability of the enumerators to say whether their enumeration is exhaustive, not in doubt whether they may have overcounted the heads with which they have dealt. We may take it, then, that there is a strong general tendency to put down the original native numbers at a lower figure than the true one.

Professor Macmillan plausibly suggests that it has been surreptitiously reinforced by the fallacy, still current throughout South Africa and still taught in its schools, that the Trekkers marched into "empty" country. And he declares with great emphasis that the devastations of the inter-native wars, "and consequentially the rate of increase once natives had been prevented from killing each other," have been much exaggerated.

The other terms required for arriving at the present rate of increase are the death-rate and the birth-rate, the former being the more important. Now outside of the towns there is no compulsory registration of native births and deaths; so that here again no conclusive evidence is yet forthcoming. But in various country districts where test investigations have been made, infant mortality among natives, as distinct from the general death-rate, has been found to be between 30 and 40 per cent. In Johannesburg the corresponding figure is approximately 60 per cent. These conditions among the natives, as Professor Macmillan observes, "hardly begin to be mended and must heavily counteract the highest possible birth-rate."¹

As to the birth-rate, we have seen that in the Transkei, for instance, an average of at least half the able-bodied males are always away from home, working on the mines or elsewhere. Changing the method of expression, we may say, then, that in effect that great

¹ Among Europeans, there is much gnashing of teeth if the rate reaches 10 per cent. The difference is a fair index of the difference of public care bestowed on the two races, not only in health matters, but in every aspect of material and moral welfare.

reserve is entirely emptied of its potential fathers for six to nine months of the year. The Transkei is not peculiar in this respect, and the situation in other reserves is much the same. It seems inevitable that such conditions should be reflected in a decline of the birth-rate ; indeed, similar conditions in the Congo have already produced a decline, and incidentally caused the Belgian authorities great anxiety for the future supply of native labour. In the Union they have not been in operation long enough for their effects to be apparent in the census returns of 1904 and 1911. But it seems probable that they account, at least in part, for the decline in the native rate of increase revealed in the 1921 Report. They have, also inevitably, been accompanied by a large growth of native prostitution in the towns ; and this in turn, through its by-products of disease and sterility, must contribute to a further lowering of the birth-rate.

Other factors adversely affecting the rate of survival are beginning to come into play. The reserves are filling up, and, on the basis of their present economy, are already at or near saturation point. Again, larger and larger numbers of natives are becoming subject to urbanisation and overcrowding. The 1921 Report ascribes the slow rate of increase among the mixed races chiefly to these two causes, which are bound to produce similar effects on natives in South Africa just as they have elsewhere.

Dr. A. W. Roberts, in a careful examination of the population question published in the Transactions of

the Royal Society of South Africa, finds that, while the rate of increase of both white and black populations has declined, the fall has been much heavier in the case of the native. In the Ciskei, from causes which are already in powerful operation in many other parts of the country, growth has ceased. And the average native increase over the whole country is now probably under 0.9 per cent. per annum. Stagnation seems, in short, not far distant. There is every prospect that within a year or two employers in the Union will follow the lead of the Congo, and start agitating for measures to encourage the native's reproductive prowess. Meanwhile, it can be confidently affirmed that the mischievous alarms about the menace of black numbers are mere figments of the repressionist politicians, wholly chimerical.

CHAPTER VIII

POLITICAL RIGHTS

Few acquainted with the facts and difficulties can profess to see clear daylight in the tangle of this problem.

GENERAL SMUTS

CHAPTER VIII

POLITICAL RIGHTS

In most aspects of the native problem disagreement arises only between those who wish the native well and those who wish him ill. The question what political rights the native ought to enjoy, tedious though its complexities may sometimes make it, has at least this special interest—that the humanitarians themselves are divided upon it.

The solidarity of the inhumanitarians, on the other hand, is of course unshakable. Wherever the Dutchman has had his way, natives have been given no franchise of any kind. That is their situation to-day in the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. In Natal, natives are not specifically debarred from the vote, but the preliminary tasks the white master requires them to perform are scarcely more natively possible than those the jealous Venus set poor Psyche in the fable. In point of fact, it appears that the number of Natal natives on the roll at any one time seldom exceeds two or three, out of a native population of $1\frac{1}{4}$ millions.

Theoretically, and to some extent practically, things are different in the Cape Province. There the natives are eligible for the franchise on precisely the same terms as the whites, and they have enjoyed this equality for

roughly three-quarters of a century. The education and property qualifications demanded are such that few white men are unable to meet them. But, owing to the wide interval between the economic and educational levels of white and black, they are exacting enough to disfranchise the very large majority of natives. The native population of the Cape is roughly $1\frac{3}{4}$ millions, and native voters on the Cape roll to-day number about 16,000, which represents an increase of a bare 5,000 in twenty-five years. Nevertheless, the electoral influence of the native vote is appreciable in a dozen constituencies or more, and in some it may be decisive.

It is now generally recognised in South Africa that there is no excuse for treating natives so very differently in different parts of what purports to be a unitary state. The question before the country, therefore, is whether the Cape system should be continued and gradually extended to the other provinces, or whether it should give way to some alternative which, while involving a less violent break in the tradition of the northern provinces, could still be uniformly applied without too great unfairness to the Cape natives, whose rights it would necessarily to some extent diminish.

The Cape delegates to the National Convention of 1909 made a grand fight of it against the illiberalism of Dutch prejudice, and, if they could not carry the battle into the enemy's territory, they stood their ground and entrenched the Cape franchise so deeply in the constitution of the Union that it could not be tampered with, except with the assent of a two-thirds majority of

both Houses of Parliament sitting together. The ensuing twenty years have rather sapped the strength of conviction which made that gallant defence possible. The taint of the Dutch spirit has spread, and even in uninfected quarters there has arisen an honest scepticism as to the adequacy of the whole conception of equal political rights. Between the two, the champions of the Cape system are neither so many nor always so valiant as of yore. But, reduced as they are, a band of earnest and well-informed whole-hoggers for equality still hold out, and command, or at least deserve, an attentive sympathy. Their case, if they will trust me to summarise it, is this :

Equal political rights, in the sense of one undifferentiated franchise for all, by which white and black vote in the same constituencies for the same candidates, are defended as suited to South African conditions.

1. On the grounds of Cape experience, which shows :

(a) that even when the number of native voters is small, native interests, however lamentably they may be neglected, cannot be too flagrantly denied and over-ridden. For a sufficiency of members of Parliament are electorally compelled to remember that their political fortunes have some direct dependence on native opinion ;

(b) that consequently Cape natives have been treated more generously than those of the other

provinces in such matters as education and the right to acquire land, and less harshly in such matters as the pass-laws ;

(c) that the success of the big reserves in the Transkei has been due not alone to the relative self-dependence of the native local authorities, but also to the knowledge that in the last resort the inhabitants could contribute directly to the counsels of the South African " nation " in the supreme legislature ;

(d) that unbroken peace has prevailed in the Cape, so far as concerns the natives, since the day they first received the vote, and that they have never abused the right then conferred.

2. Because the natives value this right, and would strongly resent being deprived of it. It is for those who can exercise it, a cherished, almost a sacrosanct, privilege, their sole means to a status of any dignity in national affairs ; for the others, it is an aspiration and a goal. The unenfranchised natives of the three northern provinces prefer to remain unenfranchised, if so they can bargain successfully for the preservation of the Cape franchise. Natives throughout South Africa regard it as the one remaining guarantee of the white man's good faith, the last shred of evidence that he is not wholly intent on closing up every avenue of native advance.

3. Because in the present incomplete state of the world's knowledge of what political forms are suited

to communities of mixed races and cultures, the Cape experiment may be a key-experiment of the utmost value for the determination of colour-problems in every part of the globe. It is at present unique, and it is unlikely to be repeated elsewhere in future. Therefore do not disturb it.

4. Because the fears based on the possible increase of the native population and electorate are much exaggerated. Even were they to be realised, no weakening of European control would necessarily follow. The sanction of European domination over so much of the world to-day does not reside in numerical preponderance, but in the white man's enterprise and force of character. Dominance will not slip from him until he becomes false to himself, or until other races, now his pupils, develop to a higher power the very traits which are his present distinctive excellences. He is likely to prove false to himself in proportion as he takes to leaning back on cushions of arbitrary racial privilege. As to the other alternative, it is doubtless human for any master to feel a certain jealousy of pupils who surpass his attainments on stepping-stones furnished by his own tuition. But what are we to think of one who, out of that jealousy, monkeys with his teaching in order to escape being so surpassed? The wise man can drown his jealousy in rejoicing that the qualities on which he prides himself should find prolonged life and augmented strength in other vessels. In any case, if genuine danger does arise from native numbers, the machinery of

government may be altered to meet it. "Majority voting arrangements" are things of a day, quite susceptible of modification.

These arguments make what may be called a strong *prima facie* case for the Cape system. It is undeniable that the experience of its working in the Cape Province has been almost entirely favourable. Cape natives have assuredly had, on the whole, much better treatment than those of other provinces, though, while the difference is attributable in part to their franchise rights, it is probably due in larger measure to the fact that the British tradition made its earliest and least weakly growth among the local whites. True, also, native franchise rights in the Cape are highly prized by informed native opinion all over the country; in principle, therefore, they ought not to be curtailed unless something equally acceptable is offered in their stead—acceptable both for its immediate practical value, and as an enduring pledge of white good faith and goodwill. This consideration has special force in a land where so much ill-considered violence has already been done to native liberties. It is true, again, that any danger of white political supremacy being jeopardised by native numbers is still remote in point of time, and that the current alarms on this head are the work of benighted politicians who suppose baashood to be best nourished on fear and hatred of the native.

The usual Afrikaner objections to the Cape system—mere, perverse expressions of the spirit that denies—

are quite trivial and would, in any other mind, be unworthy. They need not, therefore, be discussed. But there are other objections of real weight. In the first place, although informed and educated natives set great store by the vote in the Cape, there is still hardly any demand from rural natives in the Transvaal, Natal, and the Free State for similar privileges. Indeed, rural natives as a class bother very little about the white man's politics. From one angle, therefore, the clinging to the Cape franchise is perhaps little more than a natural reaction against the general atmosphere of repression, and there is ground for thinking that, if the native felt himself a free man and if he supposed the white man's policy to aim at safeguarding and enlarging his freedom, he would have no particular inclination to press for identical political rights.

The chief strength of the case for the Cape system lies in its basic assumption that full self-development for the native is the right end. That is also its fundamental difference from the Afrikaner view, which cares less than nothing for native self-development. But the notion of native self-development, while essential both as starting-point and as directing-post, is at present only an empty form, and the work of filling it with determinate and realisable content has hardly yet begun. The fact is that no one knows, least of all the native himself, what are the best lines for development to proceed upon. Moreover, the native, and therefore his needs also, are changing all the time that his friends are pondering the problem of his future ; so that the

whole position resembles a crazy syllogism in which the premises are always shifting before any inferential process can complete itself.

In these circumstances, the second assumption of the advocates of "equal rights for all civilised men"—that the native can only reach full self-development through the citizen rights at present enjoyed by the white man—appears somewhat venturesome. There is not merely the difficulty, given a definition of civilisation, of deciding what individuals comply with its terms. There is the deeper difficulty, which seems to make any workable definition impossible, that civilisation is not a uniform and constant thing at all times or in all places. In the popular mind natives are often divided into civilised and uncivilised. But there are in South Africa extremely few uncivilised natives, although there are very many whose civilisation is not of the European type. It seems that the defenders of the Cape system, in accepting this popular distinction, do not contemplate any form of racial culture special to the African, but only the standards of life and behaviour commonly observed by Europeans in South Africa. In short, they mean by civilisation what the Afrikaner means by white civilisation. This goal they either identify with, or regard as the pre-requisite of, the native's full self-development.

Now it is doubtless true that the native in South Africa cannot possibly develop apart from the white man, even if he would. Doubtless also much nonsense is talked about encouraging the native to develop "on his

own lines," especially when such talk is offered in justification of an obviously impracticable policy of segregation. In the economic field, particularly, it seems that the fate of the bulk of the native population is inevitably to be absorbed in the industrial system introduced by the whites. But that fate would not necessarily imply either social, or educational, or political identity. The native mind is not mere empty tillage for the seeds of European culture to be sown in ; it is itself a seed, and a seed already germinated. Its growth can be accelerated and enriched by whatever western plant-food may be suited to its innate capacities. How much of western culture is so suited can only be determined by application and observation, and the task of making the proper selections belongs to the dominant race in collaboration with responsible native leaders. But full self-development, if it comes at all, must surely come in the main by unfolding from within, not by grafting from without. The necessity is abundantly acknowledged by modern tendencies in native education throughout tropical Africa and throughout India. For these reasons it seems inconceivable that the ideal destiny, or even a possible destiny, of the native should be simply to follow in the political footsteps of the European. Roman Britain did not simply follow in the footsteps of Imperial Rome. It is equally inconceivable that the course of wisdom for the white man should lie in an attempt, however laudable for its surface generosity, to pass on his entire cultural heritage to the native, saying, " Here is

all I know of civilisation. Take it with my blessing, and make what you can of it." Strange, indeed, if the native's distinctive contribution to human culture were not to be elicited by less cumbrous means.

Further, it should be borne in mind that the system of parliamentary representation is germane only to the whole system of European civilisation in the midst of which it has arisen in the actual and particular course of Europe's history. Its relevance, as we know it, derives solely from its historical associations and descent. There is no reason to expect that it should have any for societies which are not, as it were, consanguineous with it. *A priori* there is scarcely any better ground for asking the Bantu of South Africa to shape their political lives in accordance with it than there is for asking Anglo-Indians to shape theirs in accordance with the Hindu caste-system. Of course, conquered nations, and conquering ones too, have in the past often adopted alien institutions and modified them with apparent success to fit their own needs. Yet that is rather a different matter, for there is here no question of the Bantu seizing upon something that goes to satisfy a felt requirement. As a matter of abstract possibility the parliamentary system might, again, show some miraculous correspondence with negroid political genius. But experience, for example, in the West Indies does not point to much likelihood of it. And the working of the system in the Cape so far must, I think, be admitted to suggest a fundamental inappropriateness only invisible to those who, like Nelson, hold the glass

to their blind eye. The Cape system assumes that all men who possess a small property or wage qualification and can pass an elementary test of literacy are sufficiently alike in their general outlook on human affairs as to be able to operate in concert the same intimate machinery for regulating them. In homogeneous societies the assumption is a tolerable fiction, because a strong natural similarity between members exists independently of the test which is supposed to establish it. Where, however, black and white live together, the superficial similarity the test insists upon is so disproportionate to the enormous and profound dissimilarity it ignores that the system becomes a pretence. "Equal rights for all civilised men" was a useful cry at a time when the only alternative was an even cruder distinction of race and colour. But logically it cannot hold water, because no adequate differentia of civilisation is discoverable ; and amid the complications of to-day even its utility is wearing thin. The modern need is for a principle which not only recognises equalities between the races, where they exist, but also takes into just account the much more important inequalities.

Considerations such as these, in my opinion, weigh somewhat heavily against the Cape system. But they are not immediately conclusive. They show perhaps that the Cape system is not the ideal, but they do not show that it is not the best of the present practical possibilities.

The decisive factor in the count is of another kind, psychological rather than rational. It is, quite simply,

the white man's fear of black domination. As the Milner Commission of 1903-1906 with shrewd realism insisted, when the native electorate under the Cape system reaches a certain size, voting is bound, human nature being what it is, to proceed upon lines of race. The whites in any constituency will not rest content to be represented by a member returned against their wishes by the native vote alone. Nor will whites as a whole tolerate a ministry dependent upon a parliamentary majority that owes its seats to the native electorate. That, indeed, is the white man's sticking-point ; he will fight to the death, especially the black man's death, rather than retreat an inch from it. Any system, therefore, under which natives may outvote whites is " sure to create an intolerable situation and is an unwise and dangerous thing." Such a system will inevitably lead to the position that exists in the Southern States of the American Union. The native may enjoy a theoretical right to vote, but in fact he is forbidden, under pain of death, to approach a polling-station.

All this may be very deplorable ; though I do not think it is—black domination over the white man would be, if possible, even more inexcusable than is white domination over the black man. But, deplorable or not, it is essential to accept it as a fact, which it is apparently impossible to remove or to alter. There is little need to continue the Cape experiment in order to discover how the principle of equal rights works out in practice.

Faced with this crux, the defenders of the Cape

system are disposed to temporise. The peril to white supremacy will, they quite truly say, take a long while to mature. In any case, political control does not necessarily depend on superiority of numbers. However, they add, if you insist, raise the franchise qualification, and modify your present majority voting arrangements. Only do not finally rob the native of all hope of participation in the joys and sorrows of civilisation, as and when he becomes civilised.

But they cannot thus escape the central dilemma. The principle of equal rights must, if it is equally applied in South African conditions, sooner or later involve a fatal danger to white supremacy : on the other hand, if it is not equally applied, the principle denies itself. Their argument about the remoteness of the danger is curious ; such remoteness may be a good ground for gratitude that time can still be taken by the forelock, but is is an odd one for delaying abandonment of a course admittedly leading to an end it is admittedly desired to avoid. The other points all seem to involve curtailments of the very equality in whose defence they are advanced. The dodge of raising the qualification merely means that the native is disfranchised for his poverty instead of for his colour ; while to alter the majority voting arrangements is, apparently, to withhold from him the ordinary uses of the democratic system into which "equal rights" were to elevate him. Doubtless, as Mr. J. H. Oldham says,¹ "fifty-one per cent. of votes is no guarantee of wisdom

¹ *White and Black in Africa.*

and truth." But is it quite fair to hold out the vote to the native as "a hope and an aspiration" and a pledge of equality, when it is only intended to allow the exercise of it on terms that heavily discriminate against him?

The contradiction at the heart of the Cape system is that it seeks to combine equal rights with white supremacy. In South African conditions, that can only be done by such stratagems as the setting of franchise tests which in practice it is much easier for white than for blacks to satisfy. The method leaves the native in enjoyment of an equality almost entirely nominal and insubstantial, and the judicial mind finds the meagre residue hardly worth preserving by equivoques so doubtful.

If the aim is to open the sovereign legislature to native representation, there are but two alternatives free from hypocrisy. One is to take stand on equal rights, and let white supremacy look after itself; the other to take stand on white supremacy, and concede the native only such a measure of representation as is consistent with it. The former, we have seen, is highly impolitic, as certainly leading to inter-racial violence and, presumably, the quasi-military subjugation of the native. The latter was the choice of the Commission of 1903-1906, a body distinguished alike for knowledge and humanity, whose views should receive very respectful attention.

The Commission expressed themselves in favour of a uniform franchise for natives in all four provinces,

provided it did not "weaken in any way the unchallenged supremacy and authority of the ruling race." The nucleus of their scheme, modelled to some extent on the practice of New Zealand, was briefly as follows :

Separate voting by native electors only for a fixed number of members (who must be Europeans) to represent them with the same status in Parliament as other members ; the number not to be more than sufficient to provide an adequate means for the expression of native views and the ventilation of their grievances, and not to be regulated by the numerical strength of the native vote. No native to vote at the election of any candidate who is to represent Europeans.

These ideas have more than a historical interest to-day, for they form the basis on which General Hertzog's proposed franchise legislation has, with a number of characteristically Afrikaner modifications, been built up. Possibly they embody the tidiest solution possible within the postulates from which the Commission were working. Their vindication is in their honesty and in the hope they afford of freeing the country from the fear of black domination.

How woefully injurious to South Africa that fear is the foregoing chapters have, I hope, made plain. It is retarding and misdirecting every form of moral and material growth. It is the centre of infection whence

spreads all the rottenness of the Afrikaner state. The boon of release from it would be of inestimable value. Dr. C. T. Loram, a member of the Native Affairs Commission, courageously recalled this fact to the Select Committee on General Hertzog's Bills in words worth repeating :

“ We feel our country won't progress, and our native people won't progress (and without their progress the country cannot go ahead), until the present fear of black domination is removed. As things are to-day, while the franchise system exists as it is, a considerable mass of our white people are afraid that with the growth of education, and with the growth of their economic position, more and more political power will pass into the hands of the natives, and because of this fear they are inclined to resent native progress in education, in economic affairs, and in other directions. We believe that if that fear of black domination can be removed we can get ahead much more quickly in the development of the natives and in the development of the whole country.”

It seems, then, that the Commission have the better of the argument as against the champions of equal rights, and that their judgment in that regard will find increasing confirmation from open-minded criticism. Unfortunately, it also has the gleeful endorsement of the inhumanitarians. It goes against the grain even to

appear to join these gentry in opposition to the forlorn hope of Cape liberalism. But that appearance is only an accidental by-effect which cannot for the moment be avoided ; we shall not embarrass them with our company for long.

Further, there is no denying that the Commission were right in concentrating on the removal of white fear of black domination. And it is equally certain that their scheme of native representation gives form to one of several ways of removing it.

In other respects, their suggestions are not so critic-proof. The most obvious shortcoming is that they wholly ignore the need to mitigate black fear (so much better grounded) of white domination. Much more than this, they expressly assert that the unchallenged supremacy and authority of the ruling race must not be in any way weakened. Now the white man could not very quickly divest himself of supremacy in South Africa, even if he tried ; and if the Commission's assertion were merely intended as a warning that the process of divestment should not be hurried, it were well enough. The use of the word unchallenged possibly, though improbably, implies that some weakening of the supremacy might be permitted, if and when a challenge to it arose. But as a statement of ultimate principle, if the assertion means, as I suppose it does, that a white parliament and government must be maintained permanently in a position to wreak their caprice on all non-white racial groups in the country, it is, to the modern consciousness, definitely inadmissible. The

white man in South Africa has good title to insist that he shall not be subject to the domination of other racial groups ; he has none to insist that they shall be, *de jure*, subject to his.

Nor is it, in fact, the case that black supremacy is the sole alternative to white supremacy. The ascendancy of the white man is guaranteed by the interval which separates his character and attainments from those of the black man. Time and fate are bound to narrow that interval, and it is the white man's duty, as trustee of backward peoples (and his profit, as economic being), to facilitate the narrowing process as best he can. If and when the interval eventually closes altogether, the backward peoples will have become in reality and in truth his equals, and all question of racial ascendancy will be irrelevant. As long as an interval exists, ascendancy will be the white man's in a degree proportionate to the interval's width ; and the relevance of the notion of ascendancy will vary similarly. But between supremacy and ascendancy there lies a world of difference. Supremacy means arbitrary power based on force or meaningless privilege ; ascendancy means rational authority based on actual superiority of function. Ascendancy and leadership are due to the white man so long as he can maintain them in free and equal competition which is also collaboration ; supremacy is never due to him at all. Great Britain has disavowed all claim to supremacy over the rest of the British Commonwealth. But the gesture has not transmitted supremacy to any other member or members ; nor

has it stripped Great Britain of her functional ascendancy.

We can now see that the true philosopher's stone of South African statesmanship is some principle which, while avoiding gross interference with local sovereignty, can prevent any racial group from exercising arbitrary control over the interests and destinies of another.

The 1903-1906 Commission, having established to their satisfaction the impolicy of equal rights, concluded that the proper substitute was differential representation. It seems possible that a better inference would have been to the general unsuitability of parliamentary machinery for the settlement of inter-racial issues. That this line of thought has been considered in some of its aspects by the latest official investigators into the African native problem is not without significance. And although East African conditions differ largely from those of the Union, there are also many points of resemblance between the two, so that we shall do well to listen to what the Hilton Young Commission have to say about native representation.

In regard to the Kenya natives the Hilton Young Commission stated bluntly that the ballot-box is entirely foreign to their ideas and quite unsuited for their use. They also held that native interests are bound to be represented by Europeans for a long while. They therefore proposed that the Government should nominate a certain number of Europeans to be formal pleaders of the native cause in the Legislative Council. Their central idea was to set up a balance of interests

by virtue of which the Government, through its official members, would have a casting vote, as it were, whenever there was a clash of racial ambitions or sentiments. At the same time, the unofficial majority, composed of the representatives of the several races, would be capable of outvoting the Government whenever, as for example on financial or other non-racial matters, it was solid. Under such a plan the official members come almost to resemble a bench before which racial matters are argued and opposed interests pleaded. They are the judges, the elected representatives of Europeans and the nominated representatives of natives being, in effect, little more than advocates at the bar. The Commission further stipulated for various precautions to ensure that native views should be presented with knowledge and sympathy. Finally, the Government's casting vote should not be surrendered, they insist,

until it has become clear that the principles of policy laid down by the Imperial Government have become so firmly established and the powers of the Central Authority to enforce their observance have been proved to be so effective that there is no danger of one community using its superior strength in the Council to impose its will on the other communities against their interests and desires.

And again with equal emphasis elsewhere :

There will be the possibility [in the Legislative

Council] of various groupings on different questions, and where there is an issue between native and non-native interests, the argument will be between their two sets of representatives, the Government holding the balance between them. Such an arrangement will throw into much clearer relief the real nature of the political problem of Eastern Africa, which is how communities differing widely from one another in tradition, habits, and stage of development can learn to live together in a single commonwealth. In so far as the unofficial representatives of the different communities succeed in reaching agreement they will, under the arrangements we propose, have increasing power to determine the laws under which they shall live. In so far as they are unable to resolve their differences, it is to the advantage of all that the questions at issue should be settled by an impartial authority rather than by a trial of political strength, which must inevitably assume a racial character and give rise to increasing racial tension.

The Commission's actual proposals, being designed to apply to conditions peculiar to Kenya, could not be adopted as a working model for South Africa. Where, for instance, a system of responsible government is in force, it would clearly be improper for the Government of the day to constitute themselves the arbiter between the races, since they depend for their existence on a racial majority. But the Commission's underlying principles that no race ought to be able to

impose its will capriciously upon another, and that the representatives of the races ought to conduct their activities, not as gladiators in the political arena, but as barristers before a disinterested court—these are both applicable to South Africa and in urgent need of application there.

Recent deliverances of two distinguished writers on African affairs¹ suggest the thought that these principles themselves are but applications of a wider principle, which is already affecting the control of human affairs in many spheres and which is destined to modify profoundly the machinery of national and international government. We may vaguely indicate the wider principle by calling it the Scientific Spirit. It manifests itself in public life chiefly through the work of impartial experts not dependent on public opinion. General Smuts has graphically described how the still vexed politicians, blown hither and thither by every gust of mass-sentiment, lean in their cynical bewilderment more and more heavily upon the men of all branches of science—men who are responsible to nobody and to nothing but their own trained reason and their own accurate, objective information. And he instances, in particular, the settlement of the Reparations question by the Dawes and Young Commissions. "In dealing with a situation which is not merely surrounded by intense popular feelings and illusions, but which above all calls for knowledge of fixed principles and for expert skill, they have successfully pointed out the way which

¹ General Smuts (Rhodes Lectures) and Mr. J. H. Oldham (op. cit.).

the statesmen have had largely to follow." General Smuts acclaims the acceptance of their settlement as a triumph for the scientific spirit, "not only notable in itself, but far-reaching as a pointer on the future road of human government." That spirit, as embodied in the expert, he hopes to see erected into a regular and necessary institution in public affairs, a *Novum Organum* of national and international administration.

Much of the work of the League of Nations is "expert" work. Nations, when they enter into international conventions prepared under the League's auspices, do so as a rule because they see that every interest has been precisely weighed and every fact taken into exact account, so that the articles of the convention appear as the conclusion drawn, in an irrefutable practical syllogism, from the premises thus established. Similarly in industry the expert is coming more and more into his own. His findings are sought and accepted, not only on points of manufacturing or productive technique, but on all principles of industrial policy. Through him, the ancient fight between capital and labour is being transformed from a fight into a partnership, the periodic modifications in the terms of which are determined mainly on expert advice. He is becoming the universal referee whose whistle it is well for all players to obey if the game of life is not to degenerate into a confused and furious mêlée.

The bearing of all this on the native question is too obvious to need elaboration. In South Africa the native question has already taken the shape of a heated struggle.

It can only end in the desperate appeal to violence that never settles anything, unless Science, "the cool, gentle, serious spirit of science," science which alone embodies the maturity of the human mind, takes charge of the situation. There is one hope, and that is to substitute government by reason and the facts for the present government by the crude racial animosities of the mob. The situation demands a judgment both disinterested and skilled ; the judgment of the Afrikaner Parliament, or any other parliament of white colonists in Africa, is neither. In Cape Town on a warm afternoon early in 1930 the Union House of Assembly was sitting for the despatch of business. It was a typical scene. General Hertzog and a few of his weary Titans peacefully dozed on the Government benches. An Opposition member was on his feet making a noise like a bluebottle at a window-pane. Suddenly from his droning the word "black" disengaged itself—the reference, I fancy, was to boots, certainly not to natives. But the word alone was enough for the Prime Minister and his stalwarts ; the context did not matter. In a twinkling they jerked themselves forward, like hunting ferrets, in a tense and as it were snarling vigilance ; the vicious bristling of the fur on the scruff of their necks was visible even from the public gallery. Such is the temper and the atmosphere in which Parliament expresses its will for the future of the subject race.

Only in sackcloth and ashes can the spirit of science contemplate things like these. And what chance have racial issues of even tolerable handling in the thick of

them ? In an epoch when the scientific spirit has made such headway in the world of affairs and acquired so much prestige as it has to-day, they can only be characterised as a grotesque anachronism. The immediate need seems to be to transfer the power of determining the main lines of native policy from Parliament to a Court of Inter-racial Justice, composed of experts whose impartiality and skilled equipment should be above question, and whose pronouncements therefore, though they could not expect the spontaneous support of local public opinion, would be able, by the sheer logic of their fitness to the facts, to quench factious opposition into tacit acquiescence. Such a Court should further be empowered to settle the application of its general policies in concrete cases where the representatives of racial interests fail to agree upon it. Within the boundaries demarcated by the Court's decisions there might be, as Mr. Oldham hints, " many matters which could be decided with advantage " by the usual parliamentary machinery.

This is not the place to inquire whence the personnel of the Court should be drawn, nor how its authority should be dovetailed into the existing constitution. Such an inquiry would be quite otiose in relation to the South Africa we know, since no Court of Inter-racial Justice will ever come into existence there. We have already seen how the Afrikaner reacts to the intrusion of science into politics.¹ His resentment at its interference with his old-world, passionate idolatries

¹ Chapter IV., p. 129*n*.

is extreme. And, simple pirate captain that he is, he much prefers to walk his own plank.

It needed the Great War to produce the League of Nations, and it will need an equally devastating local upheaval to induce the Afrikaner to hand the native question over to the scientific spirit.

CHAPTER IX

THE OFFENDING FOOT

If thy foot offend thee, cut it off : it is better to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

CHAPTER IX

THE OFFENDING FOOT

THE misdeeds wrought by the atrabilious Afrikaner upon the defenceless person of the native open up, when considered in relation to the Union's membership of the British Empire, a constitutional question of some importance.

In South Africa, as elsewhere, the British Crown has always professed to give the guarantee that all its subjects should in principle enjoy similar civil and political treatment, and that where discrimination seemed desirable or inevitable, it should not take the form of privileges granted or disabilities imposed on grounds of race or colour alone. The guarantee did not necessarily imply the "ungodly equality" which has always been so distasteful to the Dutch-speaking population of South Africa ; but it did imply that, in the adjustment of relations between the white and black races, the black should get as good as it gave.

Something of the principle involved was undoubtedly surrendered in deference to Dutch sentiment at the time of Union, when the idea of a uniform franchise for natives in all provinces was abandoned and the continuation of the *status quo* in each province was accepted. But the surrender related only to the specific

matter of the franchise, and it is fair to say that in all other respects the general guarantee remained an obligation of the Crown, while responsibility for its practical discharge was transferred to the Government and Parliament of the newly formed state, the Union of South Africa. The position was clearly understood by the competent authorities of both Britain and South Africa, and Mr. J. X. Merriman later stated in the Union House of Assembly :

“ When dealing with the Government of England in passing the Act of Union, the people of South Africa gave their emphatic pledges in regard to the natives who were placed in their care. They satisfied the Government of England that their natives would be dealt with with a most scrupulous justice and with the uttermost toleration. One of the greatest tasks imposed upon the white men of South Africa was to civilise and bring the natives up, and not to trample on them and repress them.”

The birth of the Union was plainly never thought of as entailing any repudiation of the general undertakings of the Crown in the King's South African dominions.

The events of the last twenty years in South Africa have, however, disappointed this understanding, and I do not think anyone would now claim that such safeguards of native interests as were contained in the settlement which the South Africa Act embodies have

proved effective. The course of legislation and of administrative policy has, we have seen, moved strongly in the direction of extending and consolidating white privileges at the expense of the native races.

The Statute Book and the catalogue of departmental Acts have become a mass of discriminations against the native on grounds of race and colour. In regard to the land, to industry, to education, and to parliamentary representation, the tale points all the same way. Native rights to acquire land have been severely curtailed, and the promised compensation is, after seventeen years, still denied. As regards native employment in industry, not only has a statutory colour-bar been imposed, but it has been re-imposed by every device of administrative policy that Afrikaner ingenuity can lay thought and hands to. The finance of native education has been placed on a differential basis, the chief effect of which is to retard the growth of necessary facilities. Of the two Franchise Bills before Parliament in the 1930 session, one aims at depriving the native of the fragmentary equality he has hitherto enjoyed, the other at giving exclusive rights, expressly based on colour, to white women. It is already abundantly plain that for the loss of the Cape vote the native is to receive no *quid pro quo* which could by any stretch of fancy be called reasonable.

These discriminations are, in the aggregate, of such importance in the native's economic and cultural life as to relegate him to a position of definite and, as the Afrikaner hopes, permanent vassalage in South African

society. Every one of them is a departure from the undertakings given and confirmed by the British Crown in a long series of acts and pledges throughout the best part of a century. And, speaking more generally, they conflict with every principle of equity for which British rule boasts itself to stand in every part of the world.

This being so, it cannot be legitimate for the British Crown to connive at them, and the Commonwealth of Nations within whose circle they are officially instituted is, *pro tanto*, strictly un-British. The point seems a crucial one, on which neither Crown nor Commonwealth can continue indefinitely in a state of glaring self-discrepancy.

Logically there are but two alternatives. Either means must be found of harmonising native policy in South Africa with the pledges given by the Crown and shouldered by the sovereign people of South Africa at the time of Union ; or, if no means of implementing those pledges are discoverable, the Crown must divest itself of that part of its dominions whose high contracting representatives repudiate them.

Direct intervention in the affairs of South Africa by the British Government or the Government of any other Dominion is, of course, unthinkable in the modern constitutional theory and practice of the Empire. The imperative is no longer in use in imperial diplomacy. There is, however, a method of formal representation. The Government of India use it in defence of the Indians in Natal and the Transvaal, arguing that, so long as such Indians remain without citizen rights in the

land of their adoption, they must be regarded as Indian citizens domiciled abroad and as entitled accordingly to such protection as the Indian Government can afford them. Following a similar line of argument, the British Government could presumably make good a claim that unenfranchised natives were similarly entitled to their protection. A solemn protest addressed to the Union Government by the British Government, perhaps jointly with the Governments of the other Dominions, would be an impressive gesture. There are many weighty reasons why it should be made, and General Hertzog's published Bills afford a suitable occasion for it. Its effectiveness is another matter. The admirable vigilance and pertinacity of the Indian Government have succeeded in securing only meagre benefits for Indians in South Africa, while they have done much to accentuate Afrikaner malevolence towards that ill-treated community. Outside representations in favour of the native, however firmly grounded and however influentially delivered, could hardly expect more conclusive results. It is little easier for the Afrikaner to wash out his spots of colour-mania than it is for the native to change his skin that gives rise to them ; and not the most eloquent of documents could embody the detergent power required.

Nevertheless, these difficulties should not be allowed to obscure the central issue. The Crown, in swapping British Ministers for South African Ministers while crossing the stream of the native question, has, as things have turned out, involved itself unwittingly in a breach

of faith with the natives. The autonomy of the Union may form a decisive objection to certain ways of redressing the situation. But it ought not to be taken as a pretext for the Crown's total inactivity, or used as a bolt-hole for the permanent shelter of the Crown's non-South African advisers.

And it is worth remembering that autonomy means self-government. While the Afrikaner state refuses to treat the native as an integral part of its *self*, no invocation of the doctrine of autonomy can help it to establish a logical claim to the sole control of native destinies, or to rebut a claim from outsiders to concern themselves actively with native well-being in the widest sense.

The extrusion of South Africa from the British Commonwealth would be a very drastic, not to say embarrassing, procedure, and it might have a disintegrating effect on the whole imperial structure. For everyone who believes, as I do, that the *pax Britannica* is the most powerful influence for social good that has been at work since the *pax Romana*, that would be a deplorable result. At the same time, we have to recollect that there are millions of members of native races the world over who look to-day to the British Crown, and the British Crown alone, for sympathy, support, and leading in their struggle towards self-development. To fail them and cast them aside where the Afrikaner worm dieth not, might well have imperial consequences even more deplorable than those of the alternative here envisaged. For, to reach down to the

ultimate issue, does not the unity of the Empire become meaningless if it is preserved at the cost of denying, or admitting the denial, of those spiritual values for whose actualisation among all its subjects the Empire first and foremost exists ?

CHAPTER X

THE OUTLOOK

In the beginning
Wrath and concupiscence, and in the end thereof
Tragedy so tearful that no mind can approve,
Nor any gentle heart take comfort in the event.

R. BRIDGES

CHAPTER X

THE OUTLOOK

TO sum up, the Afrikaner has actively used every device of agrarian, industrial, and educational policy to deny to the native all possible lines of racial advancement. Passively, he has refrained from improving native farming and native health and from encouraging native education.¹ The extent of his beneficence is that he has not always forbidden to others such encouragement and improvement; and he has permitted the spread of the Gospel among the heathen, "subject to definite safeguards against fault and deception." In the account of love the native is not further in his debt than this.

The effects of this attitude upon native well-being we have seen in some detail. The conditions described have arisen not in spite of the Afrikaner's efforts to prevent them, nor because of his mere negligence. They have been deliberately willed by him, and he regards

¹ "Hardly anything is being done to teach the native improved agricultural methods." (Mr. P. W. Le Roux van Niekerk, M.L.A., member of the Native Affairs Commission.)

"In comparison with the work of colonial administrations in other parts of Africa, little has been done in the Union to organise adequate and efficient medical services among the native population." (U.G. 35, 1928.)

"All the education which the natives of South Africa have received, they have had from the missionaries." (Mr. J. H. Oldham.)

them, if not as ideal, at least as not unfitting and as preferable to any practicable alternatives. It is essential to realise this, as they are frequently but falsely represented as an awkward corner into which he, a victim of difficult circumstances, has involuntarily been driven. It does not seem to me that they can possibly vindicate themselves to any humane conscience. What is perhaps more to the point, they cannot possibly last. The burden of so huge and so depressed a population as are the Bantu of South Africa is heavier than any state can carry for long, even if the Bantu themselves would long tolerate being carried in such a posture. And they will not. To-day they feel the gateway of the future to be bolted and barred against their race. They crouch in their corner, nursing a sullen anger and desperately groping for a plan. They will not be many years making up their minds. Time and fate, even more prevailing than the portcullis of the Afrikaner, are driving them on from the rear. Something must give ; it will not be fate or time.

Some comprehensive social and economic reconstruction must take place. But how ? By reason or by violence ? After disaster or before it ?

In the Afrikaner there is much to praise. He has a shrewd courage and a powerful patriotism. His race has reared eminent sons and justly famed. Except at moments of eclipse, when " colour " gets between him and the sun, he seems a proper man enough. And even then, surely, his mind keeps some relation with the absent reason thereof. Can neither logic nor moral

appeal win a way to that armour-plated heart ? Is not his colour-obsession perhaps an immaturity which, with experience and friendly interchange of divergent views, he may outgrow ? He shows himself a good fellow in a hundred ways, he is Springbok as well as Afrikaner. Work, then, upon his goodness. Will it not lead him with gentle compulsion along whatever line truth may lie upon ? If the humanitarians fail to convert him, may not that be because they themselves fall short in the contagious fire of the true evangelist or in the diplomat's persuasive gifts ?

It is well that such counsel and such reservations should be carefully considered and tested. Again, may it not be that the Afrikaner feels a conviction of rectitude as absolute, and therefore as unyielding, as the humanitarians' own ? Judgment of right and wrong varies with education, and may issue in contradictory deliverances in different people, in whom, notwithstanding, the voice of duty and devotion to it are equally strong. Variations of this kind are, we have seen, a real part of the difference between European and native. No doubt they are also present to some extent in the difference between Afrikaner and the humaner school ; for example, Sir Alfred Milner may often genuinely have thought right what President Kruger genuinely thought wrong, and vice versa. But their influence is not large. The real difference is not a mere difference of opinion. If it were, there would be at least a possibility of rational justification for Afrikaner policy ; yet, as far as we have been able to see, there is none. The

real difference is that the Afrikaner does not seek any. He makes no claim that his policy is right ; nor is he conscious of rightness in it. He simply claims, and feels, it to be necessary. He is working the whole time to a private *must* of his own, and holds all *ought* and *ought-not* to be irrelevant.¹ The usual excuse for the arrogation of this unique privilege—for an excuse is seen to be needed—is that the whites are engaged in a life-and-death combat to preserve the standards and the institutions of their civilisation. But it is easy to show that the combat is only a combat because the Afrikaner insists on treating it so. Even General Smuts allows that “there is no inherent and inevitable clash of interests between whites and natives.” In thus handling the matter on a pre-moral level, the Afrikaner inevitably handles it also on a sub-human level. His negation of the moral issue means that, where colour is concerned, he makes himself just as much a stranger to the true spiritual struggle as the brutes are. He is, in fact, in the philosophical sense as well as the colloquial, strictly a brute to the native. It is not so much that he consciously seeks relish in cruelty, although that sometimes happens ; when it does, it is human vice, not the unmorality of the beast. The point is rather that he purposely discards all social magnanimity, and rejects all conception of social service. In

¹ cf. Sir Thomas Watt, a die-hard Afrikaner of British descent : “The white man is determined to do all he can to remain and, what is more, to rule. This matter is to us in South Africa such a vital and fundamental matter that no ethical considerations, such as the rights of man, will be allowed to stand in the way.”

following his peculiar and self-chosen *must*, he is in-subordinate to the universal Necessity become conscious in man—the one imperative which for man to disobey is to deny his manhood. The Afrikaner elects to deny his manhood in order to place the desired emphasis upon his animality.

This makes it impossible for humanitarians (by definition, people who lay stress on responsibilities of a specifically human kind) to touch a responsive spot anywhere in the Afrikaner's make-up. He does not recognise the court as ambassadors from which they seek to accredit themselves to him ; between him and them, therefore, the customary diplomatic relations cannot exist. Until his recognition of that court, as a duly constituted authority having lawful jurisdiction over certain territories of life, permits of entry upon such relations, he cannot but remain proof against any appeal, whether in the intellectual or the moral spheres, that bases itself on rationality. As Mrs. Millin says, the Afrikaner mind is, in regard to colour, a shut door. Hammer, hammer, hammer, as you will, it moves not ajar, nor is any sound of answer heard from within. The whole house seems utterly deserted and dead. If there is any talisman with power upon it, Arabian Open Sesame or Virgilian Golden Bough, it is not in mortal keeping. The Afrikaner is, in simple truth, a typical monomaniac. Monomaniacs are often admirable characters, so long as the particular subject-matter which forms the focus of their malady is away beyond the horizon of their attention. But a direct reference to

that subject-matter, especially if it calls in question the objective truth of their insane delusions, is sure to bring the frenzy to the surface, and to fix and consolidate the false psychosis whence it springs. The condition is familiar enough in individuals. The Afrikaner's distinction is to have manifested it on a national scale. Doubtless he would never have made an Odysseus ; hardly, perhaps, an Achilles even. But he could have been a good and useful Ajax of a man. To contemplate the virtual ruin, through a single base obsession, of a mind that might have boasted a simple, stolid nobility is a pitiful thing.

So the argument drives us back on the old conclusion. There is little prospect of an inner change in the Afrikaner's attitude, either of his own motion or at the instance of humanist exhortation. Logical disputation makes him angry ; moral appeals make him laugh. Colour is not a question that he debates with himself. The posture in which he squares up to it has become quite instinctive, so that he has no starting-point for a spontaneous growth in grace. Change can scarcely take place in the absence of desire for change. Therein, as Plato has it, "is the evil of ignorance, that he who is neither good nor wise is nevertheless satisfied ; he has no desire of that of which he feels no want." Besides, the Afrikaner's political and ecclesiastical leaders have managed to intertwine the whole subject so inextricably with so many phases of his mental life that it cannot now be separately uprooted. His colour-obsession is like a mountainous Antarctic iceberg, whose

upper third alone protrudes into consciousness in a cloud of fog, while below the surface, twice as massive, the glaucous block of congealed lusts and animosities freezes right down to the oozy bottom of his subconscious world. No psychotherapeutic method yet devised can generate enough rational heat to dissolve the whole lump. Lastly, the humanitarian faction in South Africa is essentially an incursion from without. Its South-African-born adherents could be counted on the fingers of one hand. There pulsates in Afrikaner life proper, no breath of a Remnant that should turn ; no college, however embryonic, founds itself of reformers who might constitute the nucleus of a national renaissance, or the jumping-off place for a new integration of the popular consciousness. And the labours of external missionaries, when they have any effect at all, merely aggravate the stiffness of the Afrikaner neck.

Direct or voluntary regeneration cannot, then, be looked for. An alternative hope might conceivably be in some powerful economic stimulus, such as the surge of a new wave of prosperity. Wealth and ease, they say, are culture's seed-bed. The spread and the refinement of culture, facilitated by wealth, might lead to a real enlightenment, a real sharpening of moral and æsthetic perception. Certainly Afrikaner life now moves on a very humble plane of spirit, and if means could be found to start it climbing, it must needs soon reach a point where toleration of the worst excesses of the present régime would no longer be possible. And there is the encouraging example of that famous crusade for

the redemption of the Southern States of America, which Walter Page, America's Ambassador in London during the war, once organised in company with a small band of devoted brothers-in-arms. Their great onslaught on the long torpor of the South, delivered simultaneously along the agricultural, industrial, and educational fronts and everywhere relentlessly pressed, did much to galvanise Southern life into rejuvenescence, and led to an important economic and cultural revival. A similar course of injections with appropriate gland-extracts might have no less beneficial results in South Africa, and it assuredly ought to be tried. But we should cherish no extravagant expectations from it. It is significant that the Page campaign was wholly barren of effect upon the colour-complex of the whites. Over all his battlefield, white opinion in that regard remains, I suppose, even more barbarous than it is in South Africa. So there is small ground for thinking that progress in the economic sphere, even if it were impressive in extent, would do more than touch the fringes of the Afrikaner's trouble. Colour-madness is not a symptom of general debility—which is what Page cured the South of. It is a specific and, as it were, localised disease. Presumably, therefore, it will only yield to treatment specifically and locally applied.

However that may be, any impressive expansion of South African prosperity is improbable. The mineral resources of the Union are now fairly accurately known. Extensive deposits of coal and base metals exist. Their maximum exploitation, if it takes place, may in time

compensate for the diminishing output of gold and diamonds. It is doubtful if it will do more. Further spectacular developments, comparable with that of the Witwatersrand goldfields, are not to be expected. The main mineral developments of the continent are clearly destined to take place beyond the borders of the Union to the north.

The potentialities of farming seem to be similarly limited. Professor H. D. Leppan, in the most careful consideration yet undertaken of the agricultural future of the country, reaches conclusions full of misgiving.

“The instability,” he says, “in primary production and in the general situation permeates, often disastrously, the whole economic structure of South Africa. It has been fostered by various agencies. Political upheavals ; the exploitation of more or less ephemeral industries, such as ostrich-farming, diamonds, and even gold-mining ; maladministration, such as loan-tenure, the protection of wheat and sugar-cane cultivation, and many others. But most potent of all are the violent fluctuations imposed by the climate. This uncertainty is particularly onerous at the present phase of development, because the more efficient population is insufficient for the mutual support required by the specialised labour necessary for large-scale manufacture. Moreover, what primary production there is is often insufficient in amount to enable subsidiary manufacturing to start.” At present some 4 per cent. of the land area is under crops. Professor Leppan calculates that the maximum proportion for the future, bearing

in mind the rainfall control, is no more than 15 per cent. Nor can irrigation help much ; the total run-off of the country is said to be only enough to irrigate three million acres, and of these one and a half million are already under cultivation. Such conditions point to stock-raising as the likeliest line of future progress. But the animal industry is poorly maintained ; under present conditions ten acres a beast are hardly adequate pasturage, while "many times the present export of grains would be insufficient for feeding purposes, were the present animal population properly rationed." The whole farming world, including an extremely costly system of terminal grain-elevators, is, in fact, organised on the basis of exporting the food-stuffs which ought to be fed to local stock. To substitute a healthier arrangement would need a reversal of the habits and outlook of the farming community so drastic as to be probably impracticable. In any case, it is clear that South Africa is a country "decidedly limited in farming potentialities."

As for secondary industry, its growth will depend on the growth of the home market. It can only expect to expand in proportion as the consuming power of the miners, the farmers, and its own employees rises. The strongly entrenched tariff and wage systems of the country preclude the chance of large export trade in manufactures, except in some problematical case where specially favourable natural conditions might confer a virtual monopoly.

In short, it is a safe guess that South Africa, though

it may maintain a measure of prosperity according to its degree, will never be a rich and powerful state, and that its importance in relation to the rest of Africa will steadily dwindle. It would be spiteful to welcome this promise of enduring mediocrity ; but it does carry with it the solacing thought that the influence of Afrikaner colour-ideas may be limited correspondingly. Certainly nothing could strengthen their influence so much as the accompaniment of undisputed economic hegemony. What is really needed is a kind of moral *cordon sanitaire*, drawn along the line of the Limpopo and capable of denying them exit from Afrikaner territory. Something of this purpose has been hitherto achieved by Rhodesia's aloofness, and the tepidity of her relations with her southern neighbour. Rhodesia has in a real sense been a buffer between the worst forms of colour-mania and the rest of the continent ; and of recent years the buffer's job has, ironically enough, been simplified by the hedgehog attitude assumed by the Union under the Nationalist Government. Nevertheless, there have been plenty of loopholes, and the Afrikaner spirit has made the most of them. It has gained firm foothold in Rhodesia itself, and firmer still in Kenya farther north. There is a grave danger that the development of the Northern Rhodesia copperfields, in repeating the economic situation of the Transvaal, may also repeat the colour-complex which has grown out of that situation. General Smuts rejoices at the prospect of Northern Rhodesia's emergence as " another Transvaal on a smaller scale," and hails in it " an opening for reclaiming Africa from

barbarism such as has never been dreamt of before.”¹ Others, who know what the first Transvaal has meant in terms of native misery and who realise that the barbarism Africa needs reclaiming from is not the Bantu’s but the Afrikaner’s, are less enthusiastic. But they also see that it is round the Rhodesian copperfields that the decisive battle between Afrikanerism and humanitarianism will be fought and won.

Afrikanerism is wooing with insidious energy all white settlers between Cape Agulhas and the Nile, encircling them like a mist, mixing with the air they breathe, filtering into their system by every chink in their mental armour. Few remain immune from it for long, for there is much in their surroundings to predispose them to its infection. Indeed, it may be that Afrikanerism is simply a condition of mental atrophy and sclerosis which, in the absence of due precautions, is almost bound to assail white stock when, cut off from the living founts of its own civilisation, it seeks to maintain itself in cultural distinctness from an alien and materially weaker society, with which at the same time it closely intermingles in the economic sphere. Yet it is a disease which civilised men can well guard against, and the colonist who contracts it and has his career ruined by it strictly deserves no more commiseration than one who goes under to malaria through failure to screen his house properly with mosquito-wire. But however heavy may be the incidence of Afrikanerism among the immigrant whites, the disease itself will

¹ Rhodes Lectures.

have increasingly to contend with the powerful anti-toxin of outside opinion. One thing is no longer in doubt, and that is that the conscience of the civilised world as a whole has declared emphatically against Afrikanerism in all its forms. The doctrine of white trusteeship for the natives permanently holds the field, and the practical application of it will become more honest and more thorough as time goes on. From the standpoint of strategy, Afrikanerism represents but a few scattered pill-boxes which have not yet been mopped up ; the main advance of civilised opinion has swept over it and beyond.

Civilised opinion to-day is rapidly becoming organised, coherent, and articulate. With every advance in these directions it gains in weight and in authority. It enjoys the use, as its main speech-organs, of the far-flung and complex machinery of the League of Nations and the British Empire. By their means it makes itself audible and more and more compelling in every corner of the earth. Even the backveld, though it will doubtless continue to ignore it, can hardly pretend any longer not to hear it. The pressure of civilised opinion is palpable in truth, but very difficult to counter, and, in the end, to withstand. Political boundaries are nothing to it ; independent national sovereignty confers no exemption from it. It is not very strong, but it never "lets up," and, if you resist it, never gives you time to recover your normal balance. It comes at you from all sides at once, and so offers no steady target for counter-attack to strike at. Its operation is imperceptible but

sure. For instance, it is on record that the late King Nicholas of Montenegro once boiled in oil a Prime Minister who had the temerity to oppose his wishes. That is not long ago, but in the interval a change has taken place. Civilised opinion has drawn an invisible line, and Europe at least understands that human oil-boilings lie on the wrong side of it. One may say that Europe is now a place where such things do not happen. Perhaps one day Africa may become a place where it is equally impossible to be an Afrikaner.

The organisation and mobilisation of world-opinion, with the accompanying growth of internationalism, involve a sharp drop in the value of nationhood. The old conception of the international world as a kind of stellar system in which isolated units of statehood swim in the omnipotence of majesty each along its own self-determined orbit, is already obsolete. That world rather consists in a network of closely inter-related parts of one vast society with its own economic and political organisation. As Mr. Leonard Woolf has pointed out¹ (and other authorities, including General Smuts, have expressed themselves in a similar sense), such a world "requires considerable modifications in the ancient theory and practice of independence and sovereignty. Statesmen and peoples may refuse to make those modifications ; they may cling to an international system which does not fit the world in which we are actually living ; but, if so, they will pay the inevitable penalty of anachronism, of trying to force the twentieth century

¹ *Imperialism and Civilisation.*

into clothes which were made for the seventeenth." In such a world the treatment of the so-called subject races ceases to be the private concern of this or that colonising power and becomes in an important sense an international responsibility. Theoretical assent was given to this principle by the Berlin Act as long ago as 1885. It has been re-affirmed with greater clarity in Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations. And in the mandate system in Tanganyika Territory and elsewhere we see it in effective practical action. As implying some diminution of the old rights of sovereignty, it will be fiercely resisted by Afrikaner nationalism. On the other hand, resistance is no doubt somewhat inconsistent with the undertakings of membership of the League. If it came to a choice between the two, the Afrikaner would presumably let that membership go.

Making itself heard and felt by these means, world opinion will, it may be hoped, still be in time to save the main body of Africa from the worst effects of the political supremacy of the settler—from the uncontrolled depredations of the men who, in acquiring their vaunted "knowledge of the native," have forgotten anything they ever knew of social justice. South Africa, where the crisis is, relatively speaking, so imminent, and where time is of paramount importance, it can hardly expect to save. If the country holds to its present course, violent strife is, one would judge, at most a couple of decades off, probably less. But the solidity and compound mass of its colour-prejudice are so huge

that, even if a changed intention suddenly flashed into the Afrikaner mind, it could not transmit itself to the unwieldy weight in time to avert collision. Apparently South Africa must now proceed straight to disaster by mere force of inertia.

This is doubtless one of the main reasons for that powerful sense of overhanging doom of which I have spoken as so sharply striking the observer of the South African scene. Very plain to hear is the hiss of the approaching wings of whatever modern Eumenides are charged with avenging blood-guiltiness and the guilt whose stain is deeper than blood's. Man may not even in this lax age persist in self-will blind and surd as the Afrikaner's without in the end rousing the gods to effective wrath. But there is another cause perhaps profounder even than the perverseness of the colonist. It lies in the personality, sinister and Sphinx-like, of Africa herself. Africa is a land of calamities and excesses ; there is a stormy riot in her blood that sorts ill with the mansuetude of civilisation. Droughts, floods, famines, pestilences, rebellions, and armed strikes are of the normal rhythm of her life, recurring with damaging frequency and uncouth emphasis. The great strength of her vitality endows her with astounding resilience in recovering from them. But there remains a real incompatibility between her reckless courses and the orderly, careful, settled purposes of civilised man. To speak frankly, her respectability is in doubt. She will display her undisciplined allurements with something of the strumpet's calculation, going to men's heads

like wine and escorting them thus, with music and fatal pomp of flowers, to lasting ruin. When she has drained a client of manhood and wealth, and the hour of the waning of love is upon her, she will discard him without pity and without thanks. The Afrikaner is presumably seeking to make an honest woman of her ; the steps he takes seem better adapted to making a cuckold of himself.

The Union likes, in its complacent way, to think of itself as the oldest, richest, and most experienced sea of civilisation in all the sub-continent, with a vested right in some considerable leadership in Africa. Actually, the main work of hammering out a colour-policy seems destined to take place in the tropical hinterland, without reference to Afrikaner ideas, except as embodying blunders which it is essential to avoid. The tendency amongst the whole family of African administrations to treat the Union as the leper of the party, only recognised in order to be shunned, is already unmistakable. When the governing lines of policy have been settled in the north, the Union will eventually be compelled, and probably catastrophically compelled, to conform to them. At bottom, Afrikaner opinion is inclined to welcome the prospect of armed conflict with the Bantu ¹ ; it has such boundless confidence in aeroplanes and machine-guns. No doubt these weapons

¹ "The dominant thing," says a representative Afrikaner, "has not been justice at all ; it becomes a question of the preservation of white civilisation. If we want to hold our own, we must exterminate the native."

will easily suffice to crown the Afrikaner's brow with laurels which he may greatly prize ; but they will also intensely harden world-opinion against him, thereby hastening his absorption (or the absorption of what remains of him after his internal catastrophe) in the stream of tendency to which its approval is given.

The mills of history grind very slow ; and it is perhaps rash to form any judgment of value from a cross-section of a country's story. In a cross-section it is hard to discern exactly what elements are really making for good. Features may be seen there which the best contemporary conscience unhesitatingly condemns as bad ; yet when the line of vision shifts to another dimension, the same features, apprehended in their place in a linear progression, perhaps seem apposite, and therefore, to that extent, good. Thus Afrikaner tyranny over the natives can be regarded as indulgence itself when compared with what they have had to endure in previous epochs at the hands, for example, of Arab and Moor. In this aspect, Afrikanerism represents a new stage in the onward march of reason. But if it is proper to apply such relativity to the past, it is also proper to apply it to the present and the future. And then it becomes necessary to acknowledge that it is just as right for Afrikanerism to give way to the better possibilities of to-day as it was for the Afrikaner to take the place of Moor and Arab. In this aspect, Afrikanerism represents a crude obstruction with which the immanent power of rationality, in its striving to penetrate and transform the whole mass of human life, has to contend.

The spread of civilisation can mean nothing but the growing mastery of good sense and goodwill in mortal affairs, and the gradual conversion to their use, by their own plastic stress, of all recalcitrant material. Afrikanerism was doubtless a necessary phase in the white man's acquisition of the experience required for successful handling of the African problem. But as a method it is now superseded in the laboratory of political science, and it only remains to scrap the machinery whereby it operates in the factory of African life. A little scepticism is a wholesome thing. But can it be believed that nothing but men's impotence to follow the far designs of providence makes them see the Afrikaner spirit as the curse of the continent, and the Afrikaner, through whom it moves its wonders to perform, as a traitor to his own true self and the shame of all white blood for his folly and his crimes?

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